Practice of Karma Yoga

By

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA



HIS HOLINESS
SRI SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

OM

Dedicated to all selfless, motiveless, disinterested workers of the world who are struggling hard to get knowledge of the Self by purifying their minds, by getting Chitta Suddhi through Nishkamya Karma Yoga

OM

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The nectar-like teachings of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati, the incomparable saint of the Himalayas, famous in song and legend, are too well-known to the intelligent public as well as to the earnest aspirant of knowledge Divine. Their aim and object is nothing but emancipation from the wheel of births and deaths through absorption of the Jiva with the supreme Soul. Now, this emancipation can be had only through right knowledge.

It is an undisputed fact that it is almost a herculean task for the man in the street, blinded as he is by worldly desires of diverse kinds, to forge his way to realization of God. Not only is it his short-sightedness that stands in the way but innumerable other difficulties and obstacles hamper the progress onward towards the goal. He is utterly helpless until someone who has successfully trodden the path, comes to his aid or rescue, takes him by the hand, leads him safely through the inextricable traps and pitfalls of worldly temptation and desires, and finally brings him to his destination which is the crowning glory of the be-all and end-all of life, where all suffering ceases and all quest comes to an end. This realization is nothing but the knowing of the self as the real Self, the one without a second.

This volume is, as the title will show, a book that has been carefully prepared for the benefit of those who are intricately placed in life that they cannot

tread the path of renunciation or Sannyasa. Certainly, unless one cleanses the augean stables of his mind and expurgates all impurities through selfless and disinterested service while living amid the toil and moil of the world, he will find himself in a fool's paradise, when he puts on the second orange-coloured garb to follow the path of renunciation. So one has to do Karma Yoga first ceaselessly and untiringly, and and develop all noble qualities such as cosmic love, endurance, nobility and Brahmacharya, and thus equip himself for the great ensuing battle royal, and finally come out the victor.

The present work, *Practice of Karma Yoga,* coming as it does, from the inspired and enlightened pen of Swami Sivanandaji, is, as usual, a safe and sound guide to reach the goal in view of the aspirant. Those who have had the good fortune to know of Sri Swami Sivanandaji and his writings—from the biggest volume to the sixteen-page pamphlet distributed free to those who ask and those who do not ask—will agree with us how infallible his writings are, how simple and lucid is the language he employs in order that what he writes may be accessible not only to the university graduate, but also to him or her who has a working knowledge of English, and how sincere and earnest the author is in his unquenchable thirst to be even a 'particle' of service to his brethren. Pregnant with the magnetism of a Jivanmukta or liberated sage, they cannot but uplift the seeker after Truth to ineffable heights of spiritual glory, bliss and peace.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

PREFACE

There are altogether eight chapters in this book. The first chapter treats of the Yoga of service. Such interesting and important subjects as what is poised reason, how to find out right and wrong action, what is Nishkamya Karma Yoga, the qualifications of a Karma Yogi, work is worship, the Yoga of equanimity, etc., are dealt with lucidly. The articles entitled 'Health and Yoga' and 'Secret of Karma Yoga' are of vital importance and interest. One should never forget the idea that work is worship of God. If one remembers this fact, all work will be found very interesting. The terms 'menial service', 'this work is bad', 'that work is good', will be obliterated from the mind. You will find that all work, when done with the right mental attitude or Bhav, will elevate your mind.

The second chapter deals with universal laws. A knowledge of these laws of Nature will help the young aspirant to turn out more efficient and solid work within a short space of time; it will infuse discrimination and force him to do virtuous actions, always taking care to avoid all evil actions. He will clearly understand that there is perfect order in the universe in everything. Even a rank materialist will be induced to realize the glory of the Lord, the Lawgiver, who is hidden in these names and forms

The third chapter deals with what is known as Swadharma. The practice of Swadharma brings one

Moksha and exaltation. A fine description of the three Gunas or qualities of Nature and their operation is given here. An understanding of these Gunas will be of inestimable value to the practitioner of Karma Yoga. He can develop Sattwic virtues and eradicate Rajas and Tamas. The article 'Instructions for Aspirants' contains many valuable practical hints. Every aspirant should study these instructions very carefully daily in the morning before he starts his work. This will enable him to equip himself for the ensuing battle of daily life. He will indeed be better armed with wisdom, spiritual force and discrimination; he can thereby ward off very many obstacles that stand in the way of his daily work.

Though man feels he is weak and helpless at times, he is in reality the master of his own destiny. He can counteract dark forces of evil tendencies and can command Nature through right exertion or Purushartha. The subject is dealt with in the fourth chapter.

'Karma and Reincarnation' is the title of the fifth chapter. Here there is a description of the various kinds of Karmas. I would like you to understand that sin is nothing but a mistake only. There is no such thing as 'horrible crime' or 'heinous sin' in the light of knowledge or higher philosophy. Many people worry themselves that they have committed serious crimes and consequently become prey to the haunting thoughts of the so-called sin. One should never say: "I am a great sinner." On the contrary he should asert: "I am eternally the pure Atman." Purity is your birthright. In essence thou art the most sacred Atman. Feel this, feel this! The article on the doctrine

of reincarnation contains convincing, cogent, logical, forcible and sound arguments in support of rebirth.

In the sixth chapter I have stated that neophytes should combine action and meditation and that those who can meditate for twenty-four hours are very, very rare, and that such people should take to exclusive meditation in the solitary caves of the Himalayan jungles. I have made a sincere and whole-hearted appeal to whole-timed Sannyasins to organise their order of life and start doing service to the country in various forms according to the temperament, taste and capacity of the individual. This is the dire need of the present hour. Not very long ago Mahatma Gandhi himself once appealed to the Sannyasins at Hardwar in this regard and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then President of the Indian National Congress addressed a mammoth meeting of Sadhus and Sannyasins last year at the same place and in a similar strain. As no real service can be done without Brahmacharya, I have added a small article on this subject towards the end of the chapter.

The seventh chapter is allotted to 'Karma Yoga in the Gita'. The articles 'Prakriti does Everything', 'Action and Inaction', Scope for Personal Exertion', 'Action and Actor', 'Self-surrender', and 'Karma Yoga is better than Renunciation of Action', make the chapter complete. I want my readers to read this chapter over and over and understand the full significance of Karma Yoga.

The eighth chapter makes the book really useful. You have some very illuminating and inspiring stories which have been chosen with care and added in the hope that the book will be of practical utility to the

readers. These stories inculcate the principles of self-sacrifice and present to the householders some really elevating and inspiring ideals.

As the maintenance of the spiritual diary is nowhere more needed than when practising Karma Yoga, I have added a brief note on how such a diary should be maintained, together with the table which has also been appended therewith.

I appeal with folded hands to the readers of this book to start practising Karma Yoga in right earnest after digesting and assimilating the truths and ideals that are inculcated herein. May the indweller of our hearts, the omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent Ishwara grant you all strength, peace, spiritual power, discrimination, alertness, far-sightedness to practise Karma Yoga and to realize the grand truths of the Upanishads after getting Chitta Suddhi through incessant and untiring selfless service, is the humble and earnest prayer of thy sevak and comrade.

—*Sivananda.*

CONTENTS

CHAPTER THREE

SWADHARMA

CHAPTER FOUR

KARMA AND FREEDOM

CHAPTER FIVE

KARMA AND REINCARNATION

CHPATER SIX

GARLAND OF KARMA YOGA

CHAPTER SEVEN

KARMA YOGA IN THE GITA

CHAPTER EIGHT

INSPIRING STORIES

APPENDIX

ONLY GOD I SAW

When I surveyed from Ananda Kutir, Rishikesh,
By the side of the Tehri Hills, only God I saw.

In the Ganges and the Kailas peak,
In the famous Chakra Thirtha of Nimisar also, only God I saw.

In the Dedhichi Kand of Misrik,
In the sacred Triveni of Prayag Raj too, only God I saw.

In the Maya Kund of Rishikesh and
In the springs of Badri, Jumnotri and Gauri-Kund to boot, only God I saw.

In tribulation and in grief, in joy and in glee,
In sickness and in sorrow, only God I saw.

In birds and dogs, in stones and trees,
In flowers and fruits, in the sun, moon and stars, only God I saw.

In the rosy cheeks of Cashmere ladies,
In the ugly faces of African negroes, only God I saw.

In filth and scents, in poison and dainties,
In the market and in society, only God I saw.

In trains and cars, in aeroplanes and steamers,
In Jutkas and dandies, in tumtums and landan, only God I saw.

I talked to the flowers, they smiled and nodded,
I conversed with the running brooks, they verily responded, only God I saw.

In prayer and fasting, in praise and meditation,
In Jap and Asan, in Tratak and concentration, only
God I saw.

In Pranayama and Nauli, in Bhasti and Neti,
In Dhouti and Vajroli, in Bhastrika and Kundalini,
only God I saw.

In Brahmakara Vritti and Vedantic Nididhyasan,
In Atmic Vichara and Atmic Chintan, only God I
saw.

In Kirtan and Nama Smaran, in Sravan and Vandan,
In Archan and Padasevan, in Dasya and Atma-
nivedan, only God saw.

Like camphor I was melting in His fire of knowledge,
Amidst the flames outflashing, only God I saw.

My Prana entered the Brahmarandhra at the
Moordha,
Then I looked with God's eyes, only God I saw.

I passed away into nothingness, I vanished,
And lo, I was the all-living, only God I saw.

I enjoyed the Divine Aiswarya, all God's Vibhutis,
I had Viswaroop Darshan, the Cosmic Consciousness,
only God I saw.

Glory, glory unto the Lord, hail! hail, hail! O sweet
Ram.

Let me sing once more Thy Name—Ram Ram Ram,
Om, Om, Om, only God I saw.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O Lord! I do want to serve the world disinterestedly and practise Nishkamya Karma Yoga to get Chitta Suddhi. I am sometimes perplexed, agitated and depressed. I am in a dilemma. I do not know what to do. I have no clear idea of right and wrong. I have no knowledge of the Sastras and the Smritis. I do not know Sanskrit, Laghu nor Sidhanta Kaumudi. I have no training to hear Thy shrill inner voice.

This world is full of apparent contradictions, paradoxes and puzzles, peculiar troubles and difficulties. This world is peculiar. Thou hast given me a peculiar mind with peculiar habits. Nay, this world is full of temptations. I have no strength to resist temptations, public opinions, criticisms, oppressions, pressures and even assaults. I am not able to please anybody to the fullest extent. Enemies do crop up, though I keep quiet, though I do not interfere with anybody.

O sweet adorable One! Give me strength to control the restless turbulent Indriyas and the mind that ever wanders. Stand behind me always and guide me in every inch of my action. Give me good Prerenas (thoughts). Give me Chitta Suddhi Give me a calm, pure and balanced mind. O Lord, give me light, knowledge and purity. Om. Om. Om.

SIVA MANASA POOJA

of Sri Sankaracharya

MENTAL WORSHIP OF SIVA

1. O Lord! Thou ocean of mercy, O Pasupati! Do accept these offerings conceived in my mind, viz., a Simhasan adorned with precious rubies, a pleasant cool bath, a splendid garment adorned with various gems, sandal-paste scented with musk, a garland made up of jasmine, Champaka flowers and Bilva leaves, incense and light.

2. O Lord! Kindly accept ghee, kheer, the five-fold food, plantain mixed with milk and curd, sherbert, various kinds of vegetables, palatable water, a brilliant piece of camphor and betel—all these food-offerings placed in a golden vessel which is bedecked with nine kinds of precious jewels which are conceived in my mind out of devotion to Thee.

3. The umbrella,, two Chamaras, a fan and a clean mirror, the music of the lute, the kettledrum, the Mridanga and the horn, singing and dancing, prostrations of the eight limbs of the body, various hymns and prayers—all these which I have thought of in my mind, I duly offer to Thee. Do accept my worship, O my Lord!

4. Thou art the Atman, Buddhi is Thy consort Parvathy (who is born of the mountain), the Pranas

Thy attendants, this body Thy temple, the action of sensual enjoyments Thy worship, deep sleep is the remaining in Samadhi,, walking by my feet is perambulation around Thee, all my speeches are Thy praises, whatever actions I perform are Thy worship, O Sambho!

5. O Lord! Forgive all the sins that are committed by the hands and feet or the tongue (speech) and the body, or the ears and eyes, or the mind, whether Vihita (lawful) or Avihita (forbidden). Glory be unto Thee, Thou ocean of mercy! Glory be unto Thee, O Mahadeva (God of gods)! O Sambho (bestower of happiness).

INTRODUCTION

It must be remembered that Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana do not mutually exclude each other. Karma Yoga leads to Bhakti Yoga which in its turn leads to Raja Yoga. Raja Yoga brings Jnana. Para Bhakti is Jnana only. Bhakti, it must be borne in mind, is not divorced from Jnana. On the contrary, Jnana intensifies Bhakti. Karma purifies the heart. Bhakti removes the tossing of the mind. Raja Yoga steadies the mind and destroys Sankalpas. Every Yoga is a fulfilment of the preceding one. Bhakti is the fulfilment of Karma, Yoga (*i.e.*, Raja Yoga) of Bhakti and Karma, and Jnana of all the preceding three.

The practice of Karma Yoga prepares the aspirant for the reception of knowledge of the Self. It makes him a proper Adhikari (aspirant) for the study of Vedanta. Ignorant people jump at once to Jnana Yoga, without first having a preliminary training in Karma Yoga. That is the reason why they fail miserably to realize the Truth. The impurities lurk in the fourfold mind (Antahkaıana). The mind is filled with likes and dislikes, jealousy, etc. They only talk of Brahman. They indulge in all sorts of useless controversies, vain debates and dry, endless discussions. Their philosophy is only on their lips. In other words, they are lip-Vedantins. What is really

wanted is practical Vedanta through ceaseless, selfless service.

"Work for the sake of the work without any motive" is all very well in words. But when one comes to the practical field, when one endeavours to put it into actual practice, he will have to encounter countless difficulties at every step. A Jnani alone can do absolutely unselfish, motiveless action. A Sannyasin only who has renounced the world can do selfless deeds. A householder's mind is saturated with many desires. He expects fruits for every action. But gradually he too can wean the mind from expectation of rewards. It is all a question of discipline of the mind. By and by his selfish nature will be destroyed. He will understand the glory of Nishkamya Karma Yoga. Then he will be able to do works without any motives, without expectation of fruits of action. Of course, it is a question of time. One must be patient and persevering.

Two things are indispensably requisite in the practice of Karma Yoga. The Karma Yogi should have non-attachment to the fruits of actions. He will have to dedicate his actions at the altar of God with the feeling of Ishwararpana. Non-attachment brings freedom from sorrow and fear. Non-attachment makes a man absolutely bold and fearless. When he dedicates his action at the Lotus Feet of the Lord he develops devotion to God and approaches Him nearer and nearer. He gradually feels that God works directly

through his Indriyas or instruments. He feels no strain or burden in the discharge of his works now. He is quite at ease. The heavy load which he felt previously on account of false notion has vanished out of sight now.

The doctrine of Karma forms an integral part of Vedanta. It expounds the riddle of life and the riddle of the universe. It brings solace, satisfaction and comfort to one and all. It is a self-evident truth. Fortunately the Westerners have also begun now to acknowledge its importance and veracity. Even the Americans have full belief in this doctrine. Every sensible man will have to accept it. There is no other way to understand the mystery of actions. "As you sow, so shall you reap" holds good not only in the physical plane but also in the moral world as well. Every thought and every deed of yours generates in you certain tendencies which will affect your life herein and hereafter. If you do good Karmas in a selfless spirit, you will soar high to the regions of bliss and peace. Karma is the lowest rung in the spiritual ladder. But it lifts us up to ineffable, magnanimous heights. Its glory is too great to be described. It destroys pride, selfishness and Tamas. It brings wonderful results. It helps growth and also evolution.

Freedom is man's birthright. Freedom is Satchitananda. Freedom is immortality. Freedom is peace, knowledge and bliss. Consciously or unconsciously,

knowingly or unknowingly, all are attempting for this freedom. Nations are fighting in the battlefield for freedom. A robber robs for getting freedom from want, but his movement may be crooked and circuitous. Every movement of your foot is towards God and freedom.

You may reach the same goal by different paths. Just as you can reach Mt. Kailas by different paths such as via Badri Narayan or Almora or Gangotri or Ladhak, so also you can reach the goal of life by different paths, *viz.*, the path of works (Karma Yoga), love (Bhakti Yoga), psychic control (Raja Yoga) or self-analysis and knowledge (Jnana Yoga). Just as you can reach Calcutta by train, car, steamer or aeroplane, so also you can reach the goal of life or your spiritual destination by any one of these four paths. Lord Krishna says in the Gita:

Ye yatha maam prapadyante taamstathaiva bhajamyaham
Mama vartmaanuvartante manushyaah. Partha sarvasah.

"However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side, is Mine, O Partha." Chapter IV-11.

The four divisions are not hard and fast. There are no marked demarcation lines among the four paths. They are not cut and dried. These paths are made in accordance with the temperament or tendency that

is predominent in the individual. One path does not exclude the other. The path of action is suitable for a man of Karmic tendency. The path of love is adapted for a man of emotional temperament. The path of Raja Yoga is fitted for a man of mystic temperament. The path of Vedanta or Jnana Yoga is suitable for a man of will or reason. Each path blends into the other. Ultimately all these paths converge and become one. It is very difficult to say where Raja Yoga ends and Jnana Yoga begins. All aspirants of different paths meet on a common platform or junction in the long run.

A Karma Yogi does self-sacrifice to kill his little self. A Bhakta practises self-surrender to destroy his egoism. A Jnani practises self-denial. The methods are different but all want to destroy this little, self-arrogating 'I' which is the root cause of human suffering. When this is done, they meet at the same goal or point.

Sarvam karmaakhilam Partha gnane Parisampyate.

"All actions in their entirety, O Partha, culminate in wisdom." Gita: Chapter IV-33.

Similarly, the Bhakta gets Jnana. Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "To these devotees, ever harmonious, worshipping in love, I give the Yoga of Discrimination by which they come unto Me." In chapter eighteen Lord Krishna says: "By devotion he knows Me in essence, who and what I am; having

thus known Me in essence he forthwith entereth into the Supreme." Karma, love and Yoga are the means to an end. Jnana is the end. Just as rivers join the sea, so also Karma, love and Yoga join the ocean of Jnana.

Karma Yoga prepares the mind for the reception of light or knowledge. It expands the heart and breaks all barriers that stand in the way of unity or oneness. Bhakti and meditation are also mental Karmas. There cannot be Jnana without Yoga. The fruit of Bhakti is Jnana. Have you understood now the nature of the four Yogas and their inter-relations?

Every action is a mixture of good and evil. There can be neither an absolutely good action nor an absolutely bad action in this world. This physical universe is a relative plane. If you do some action it will do some good in one corner and some evil in another corner. You must try to do such actions that can bring maximum good and minimum of evil. Good work will produce good effect and evil work will cause bad effect. But if you know the secret of work, the technique of Karma, you will be absolutely free from the bondage of Karma. That secret is to work without any attachment and egoism. The central teaching of the Gita is non-attachment to action. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna in emphatic terms: "O Arjuna, work incessantly. Your duty is to work always. But do not expect fruits. The lot of that man who expects fruits is pitiable indeed! He is the most

miserable man in this world."

You cannot remove completely all the evils from this world. Just as in gout and rheumatism the pain and swelling shift from one joint to another, just as in pyaemia and diabetes or carbuncle if one boil is cured another crops up in another place, so also if one evil is eradicated in one place, another evil manifests in another place. Social workers pity the lot of young widows and try to do widow-marriages. They think that they are doing good to the country. But another evil crops up—difficulty comes in for the marrying of other girls. They remain unmarried. This is another evil. Social workers try to end prostitution. This is laudable work. But as passion is very powerful and uncontrollable, those who cannot afford to marry, begin to molest and outrage family women secretly. Even legislation cannot stop this evil. Clandestine prostitution takes place vigorously. Thi world is very crooked. It is like the tail of a dog. Try to straighten the tail of a dog. As soon as yo take away your hands, it will again become crooke So is this world. So many Avatars, so many Yogi Acharyas, saints and prophets have come into th world and preached. Still it is crooked, it is in t same state. Therefore, do not bother yourself mu in reforming this crooked world. This can never done. Reform yourself first. Then the whole wo can be reformed. How can you help the world w you are yourself weak and ignorant? It will be

a blind man leading another blind man. Both must fall into a deep abyss.

The greatest help or service that you can do to the world is imparting of knowledge of God. Spiritual help is the highest help you can render to mankind. The root cause of human suffering is Avidya or ignorance. If you can remove this ignorance in men, then only can they be eternally happy. That sage who tries to remove the ignorance is the highest benefactor of the world. If you remove the hunger of man by giving food, it is only temporary physical help. It is removal of a physical want for three hours. Then the hunger manifests. The man remains in the same miserable state. Building of hospitals, rest-houses and *choultries* for the distribution of free food, distribution of clothes, etc., are not the highest kind of help. Miseries are not eradicated The world will continue to remain in a miserable state even if you build many millions of hospitals and feeding-places. Get Brahma Jnana or divine knowledge, and distribute this knowledge everywhere and remove the ignorance in men. Then only will all kinds of miseries, tribulations and evils be completely eradicated.

The man who serves the world really serves himself. That man who helps others really helps himself. This is another important point. Generally worldly-minded people are puffed up with egoism when they render some help to others. They are filllcd with pride. This world does not want the help of anybody.

There is one omnipotent Ishwara who controls and guides this universe. He can immediately supply a thousand and one Tilaks, Newtons, Shakespeares, Napoleons, Valmikis and Yudhistiras. When you serve a man, think God has given you an opportunity to improve, correct and mould yourself by service. Be grateful to that man who gave you a chance to serve.

Pain is the best teacher in this world. Man learns very useful lessons daily through pain, suffering, poverty, privation and sickness. It is the eye-opener. It is a blessing in disguise. It is the sweet messenger from God. Kunti Devi said: "O Lord Krishna! Let me always remember Thee. Give me always pain. I may forget Thee if I get pleasure." Bhaktas rejoice in suffering. They welcome pain always. Stoics also do the same.

Pain corrects, educates and disciplines the soul. It infuses mercy in the heart. It develops power of endurance and patience. It softens the hard heart. It develops the will-power. It fills the heart with sympathy. It makes the proud man humble. It purifies the heart. Just as the iron is shaped in the anvil by heating, so also man's character is moulded by blows, knocks and pains. Just as impure gold turns out to be pure by melting it in the crucible several times, so also man becomes pure by being burnt in the furnace of pain.

Philosophy aims at finding out the cause for this

pain and tries to eradicate the pain by prescribing suitable remedies. It is chill penury that turns the mind of a man towards God. Knocks and blows of a severe type wean the mind of a man from sensual objects and turn it towards the spiritual path. Pain and poverty, evil and misery mould the character of a man more than pleasure and wealth. Poverty has its own advantages. Censure and blows are better teachers than praise and honour. Pain is a better teacher than pleasure. Poverty is better teacher than wealth. Pain and poverty develop endurance in man. Sri Sankara, the greatest philosopher and genius the world has ever produced was born in a very poor family. Lord Jusus was born the son of a carpenter. Poor people exert to achieve greatness, whereas the sons of rich people lead a life of luxury and inertia. [illegible] knocks immediately [illegible] nge the angle of [illegible] that lies within. [illegible] g actions coalesce together and form tendencies. The tendencies develop into character. Character produces will. If a man has a strong character, he has a strong will. Karma produces character and character in turn produces will. People of gigantic will have developed it through Karma done in countless births. It is not in one birth that a man develops a mighty will. He does various good actions in several births. The potencies of these actions collect together and in one birth the

struggling man bursts out as a gaint like Buddha, Jesus and Sankara. No action goes in vain. Nothing is lost. Patient, indefatigable effort is needed.

Ignorant people foolishly imagine that knowledge comes from without. It is a sad mistake. All knowledge comes from within. This external universe is nothing. It is a mere dot or drop in infinity. It is like the footprint of a calf. It is mere 'Spandabhasa' or mere vibration in one corner of Brahman where there is Maya. What you get from outside is a simple suggestion or external stimulus. The whole magazine of knowledge is within the Atman or the Self. The Atman is the storehouse or Bhandara of knowledge. This external suggestion strikes against the source and causes ignition. There flashes out knowledge. All Sadhana and Yogic practices aim at removing the veil only. When the veil is removed, when the curtain drops, when the sheaths are torn asunder, the Sadhaka shines in divine glory. He gets knowledge of the Self. The whole mysteries of Kaivalya, the whole knowledge of the Atman are revealed like the Amalaka fruit in the hand. Unfortunately for us, the present system of education in India thickens the veil of ignorance and stiffens the ego.

People have various motives when they work. Some work in society for getting name and fame. Some work for getting money. Some work for getting power. Some work for getting enjoyment in heaven.

Some build temples with the idea that their sins will be washed off. Some perform certain Yajnas for getting a son. Some dig tanks with the motive that their names will be remembered even after they die. Some make beautiful gardens for the use of the public with the idea that they will enjoy such lovely gardens in Swarga. Some do charity with the motive that they will be born as rich landlords in the next birth.

He who does selfless service without expectation of fruits of any kind becomes a powerful Yogi. A Karma Yogi knows the secret of work. He does not allow any energy to be unnecessarily frittered away. He conserves and regulates energy. He knows the science of self-restraint. He utilises the energy for good purposes that can bring maximum good to a great number of people. This is skill in action which the Gita speaks of in chapter two. He develops a strong will and strong character. One should have patience. Then only will he realize immense benefits. Generally people are impatient and they expect Siddhis after doing a little selfless service. The real Karma Yogi who serves people with humility and Bhav becomes the real ruler of the world. He is honoured and respected by all. Honour comes by itself. There is a hidden power in selfless service.

"The Karma Yogi realizes for himself the Atma Jnana in the course of time." Gita: Chapter IV-38.

"The Karma Yogi, having abandoned the fruit of

action, obtains eternal peace or release which comes of wisdom, while, he who, being prompted by desire, is attached to them, becomes bound." Gita: Chapter V-12.

Chapter One

YOGA OF SERVICE

WHO IS GOD?

God is Satchitananda (existence absolute, knowledge absolute and bliss absolute). God is Truth. God is the Light of lights. God is all-pervading intelligence or consciousness. God is all-pervading power that governs this universe and keeps it in perfect order. He is the inner ruler of this body and mind (Antaryamin). He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent He has the six attributes of Jnana (wisdom), Vairagya (dispassion), Bala (strength), Aishwarya (Siddhis or powers), Sri (wealth) and Kirti (fame). Hence He is called Bhagawan.

He exists in the past, present and future. He is unchanging amidst the changing phenomena. He is permanent amidst the impermanent, and imperishable amidst the perishable things of this world. He is Nitya, Sasvata, Avinasi, Avyaya and Akshara. He has created this world through the three Gunas—Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas—for His own Lila. He has Maya under His control.

He is Swatantra or independent. He has Satkama and Satsankalpa. He dispenses the fruits of actions of

the Jivas. He is all-merciful. He quenches the thirst of the Jivas in the form of ice and succulent fruits. It is through His power that you see, hear and talk. Whatever you hear is God. God works through your hands and eats through your mouth. On account of sheer ignorance and Abhimana you have totally forgotten Him.

Nitya Sukha and Parama Shanti can be had only in God. That is the reason why sensible, intelligent aspirants attempt to have God-realization. God-realization can bring an end to the ever-revolving wheel of births and deaths and bestow supreme and everlasting happiness on mankind. This world is really a long, long dream. It is indeed a jugglery of Maya. The five senses delude you at every moment. Open your eyes, O Prem! Learn to discriminate. Understand His mysteries. Feel His presence everywhere as well as His nearness. Believe me, He dwells in the chambers of your own heart. He is the silent Sakshi of your mind. He is the Sutradhara or the holder of the string of your Prana. He is the womb for this world and the Vedas. He is the prompter of Sankalpa. Search Him inside your heart and obtain His Grace. Then alone you have lived your life well. Then alone you are a man. Then alone you are truly wise. Quick, quick, there is not a moment to waste, not a minute to delay. Now is the time or never will it come. Utilise every moment in spiritual Sadhana.

2. YOGA OF SERVICE

What is the object of Seva or service? Why do you serve the poor and the needy and the suffering humanity at large? Why do you serve society and the country? Yes, by doing service you purify your heart. Egoism, hatred, jealousy, the idea of superiority and all the kindred negative qualities will vanish. Humility, pure love, sympathy, tolerance and mercy will be developed. The sense of separateness will be annihilated. Selfishness will be eradicated. You will get a broad and liberal outlook on life. You will begin to feel oneness and unity. Eventually you will obtain knowledge of the Self. You will realize "One in all" and "all in One". You will feel unbounded joy. What is society after all? It is nothing but a collection of units or individuals. The world is nothing but a manifestation of God. Service of humanity and the country is, in fact, nothing short of service of God. Service is worship. But one should serve with Bhav. Then alone he can have quick realization and purification of the heart.

The sense of separateness is a colossal fetter. Kill this sense of separateness through Brahma Bhavana by developing Adwaitic unity of consciousness and by means of selfless service. This sense of separateness is an illusion created by ignorance or Maya.

Develop keen enthusiasm for disinterested selfless service. Be kind to all. Love all. Serve all. Be [illegible]

and generous towards all. Serve the Lord in all. That is the way to reach the goal.

Just as a mother who has lost nine children loves the only surviving son so dearly, so also you will have to develop boundless love for all beings. This is the first and foremost qualification for an aspirant. The astral body of one who has this boundless love will shine with magnificent brilliance and lustre. There will be a glow of ineffable splendour.

He who ignores his own pleasures and comforts and tries to help others always is really an advanced student in the path of spirituality. He carries the master-key to unlock the realms of spiritual bliss.

You must be able to think quickly and act promptly with unerring precision and profound concentration in times of emergencies. You must take care to see that you are not rash and impetous. You must be cool and collected.

Many aspirants of the present day prefer to do some pleasant work, some writing, some collection of flowers for Puja, arranging books in the library, some type-writing, some kind of supervision and management work, etc. They dislike works such as drawing water and hewing wood, cleaning dirty utensils, washing clothes, sweeping, cooking, cleaning bed-pans and nursing the sick. They consider these works as menial. They have not tried to understand the real spirit of Karma Yoga and Vedanta. They are yet Babus. They need rigorous discipline and training. I

will put these Babu-aspirants to carrying the motion-buckets of the sick for a year, washing plates for another year, and sweeping the room and washing the clothes of the sick the third year. Then alone they will become real aspirants. Then alone they will be ready for the commencement of meditation.

If an Ashram is not properly conducted, the kitchen becomes a fighting centre. The whole Maya is in the kitchen. Aspirants begin to fight there. One aspirant says: "I did not get any ghee or vegetables today." Another aspirant says: "The dal soup was very watery. Viswaranjan added plain Ganges water to the soup. He dislikes me." But if there is a really developed Karma Yogi to train the young students, the real Adwaita Vedanta begins in the kitchen of an Ashram and ends in the Vasishtha Guha of the Himalayas. A kitchen is the best training ground or school for developing tolerance, endurance, forbearance, mercy, sympathy, love, adaptability, and the spirit of real service for purifying one's heart and for realizing the oneness of life. Every aspirant should know how to cook well.

If one lives with his Guru, he must be prepared to do willingly any work assigned to him. If you create interest in work which the mind revolts against, you later like to do any kind of work. By so doing, you will undoubtedly develop your will-power.

Balance of mind brings about real lasting happiness to a disciplined man. It is not a commodity which

be purchased on the market. It is indeed a rare gift which can only be attained by protracted selfless service with Atma Bhav, equal vision, controlled Indriyas and self-restraint, by developing virtues such as adaptability, broad and generous tolerance and a high degree of endurance, serenity, calmness, control of temper and by removing anxieties, worries, fear and depression by spiritual Sadhana and meditation. It is serenity and balance of mind that can give real, eternal happiness to man. The wealth of the three worlds is nothing when compared to the bliss enjoyed by that great soul who has serenity and a balanced mind. Now, tell me honestly, where is bliss? Who is a great man? Is it in a wealthy king with an unbalanced and unbridled mind, living in a palace, or in a poor saint with a magnificent calm and balanced mind and living in a grass hut on the banks of the sacred Ganges?

If you want to serve another man truly, you should try to please him in all respects. You should not do anything that pleases you only. You should do such actions as can bring him immense happiness. This will constitute real service. But generally under the camouflage of serving others, people try to please themselves only. This is a serious mistake. He who gives the handle of a sharp knife to another to hold, holding the sharp blade himself does real service. A real Sevak rejoices in suffering. He takes on his shoulders the most responsible, difficult and the most

ardous and uninteresting of works and kills his own little self just to please others. He willingly undergoes pain and suffering in order to serve and please others.

To stop the breath by means of Kumbhak for two hours, to twirl the beads for twenty-four hours, to sit in Samadhi for forty days in an underground cellar without food by cutting the *frinum linguae* of the tongue and practising Khechari Mudra, to stand up on one leg in the scorching heat of the summer sun, to do Tratak on the sun at mid-day, to chant *Om, Om, Om* in silent and sequestered jungles, to shed an ocean of tears while doing Sankirtan—all these are of no avail unless one combines burning love for Him in all beings and a fiery spirit of service in serving Him in all beings. Aspirants of the present day are sadly lacking in these two indispensable qualifications. And that is the root cause why they do not make any headway at all in their meditation in solitude. They have not prepared the ground, I mean the Antahkarana, by protracted practice of love and service in the beginning. I have seen several Bhaktas in all my experiences of life in this line—Bhaktas who wear half a dozen rosaries around their necks and wrists, and mutter *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* day in and day out with a long Japa Mala in their hands. These Bhaktas will never approach a sick man even when he is in a dying condition and give him a drop of water or milk, and ask: "What

do you want, brother? How can I serve you?" Out of curiosity they will be just looking at him from a distance. Can you call these people true Vaishnavites or Bhaktas? Can there be an iota of real benefit in their meditation or Bhajan? A Jinda Narayan (living Narayan) in the form of a sick patient is in a dying state. They have not got the heart to go and serve him or even to speak a few kind and encouraging words at a critical juncture, when his life is trembling in the balance! How can they expect to have Darshan of that all-merciful Hari when they have hearts made of flint? How can they hope for God-realization when they have not the eyes to see God in all beings and the spirit of service to serve Him in all these forms?

That man who has knowledge and devotion can alone do really efficient service to the country and the people. Jnana and Bhakti must be the rock-bottom basis of Karma Yoga. Jnana can be combined with Karma Yoga, or Bhakti Yoga can be combined with Karma Yoga in the beginning with much advantage. The Jnana-Karma-Yogi thinks and feels that he is serving his own Atman and realizes Adwaitic consciousness. The Bhakti-Karma-Yogi thinks and feels that he is serving his Lord in all, his own Ishtam and realizes God-consciousness and has Darshan of his Beloved. Mere philanthropical work out of sympathy without devotion and knowledge is nothing more than social scavengering. It is not Yoga or worship. It is on a lower plane. It cannot elevate a man

much. The progress is dull and slow, if progress you can call it. Remember, it is the mental attitude or Bhav that does immense good.

A Karma Yogi who does all work in the form of worship of God in the beginning, who surrenders his body, mind, soul and all his actions as flowers or offerings at the Lotus Feet of the Lord, who is ever absorbed in the Lord by constant thought of God, loses himself in God-consciousness by total self-surrender. He gets absorbed in God. His will becomes one with the Cosmic Will. That is his last and advanced stage. He realizes that whatever is going on in the world is but the Lila of the Lord or divine sporting. He realizes the truth of the utterances in the Brahma Sutras· *Kokavattu lila kaivalyam.* He feels that he is one with the Lord and that he is a partner in His Lila. He lives for Him only. He lives in Him only. His thoughts and actions are now of God Himself. The veil has dropped. The sense of separateness has been totally annihilated. He now enjoys the Divine Aishwarya.

A doctor who works in the hospital should think that all patients are manifestations of God. He should think that the body is the moving temple of God and that the hospital is a big temple or Brindavan or Ayodhya. He should think: "I am doing all my actions to please the Lord and not to please my superiors." He should think that God is the inner ruler (Antaryamin), that He alone manipulates all

his organs from behind, and that He is the wire-puller of the body. He should think that He works to carry out the Divine Will in the grand plan or scheme of things. He should consecrate all his actions at His Feet, whether they be good or bad. He should then say: *Om Tat Sat Krishnarpanamastu* or *Om Tat Sat Brahmarpanamastu* in the end and at night when he retires to bed. This is Jnanagni or the fire of wisdom or the fire of devotion that destroys the fruit of action, brings about Chitta Suddhi, knowledge of the Self and final emancipation. He should never dream even: "I have done such meritorious acts. I will get an exalted place in Swarga, etc. I will be born in the next birth as a rich man." By means of constant practice of this nature he will slowly get mental non-attachment towards work. A lady, when she does her household duties, should also entertain the above mental attitude. In this manner all actions can be spiritualized. All actions will become worship of the Lord. A man can realize Godhead in whatever situation he may be placed in life, if only he works with this right mental attitude.

May the great Lord, the Flute-Bearer of Brindavan, the lover of Radha, the joy of Devaki, grant us right belief, Suddha Prem, right mental attitude and inner spiritual strength to do selfless service to the world, and to realize Godhead even while remaining in the world, by doing Nishkamya Karma Yoga with Narayana Bhav, by remembering Him at all times and by

offering all actions, body, mind and the soul at His Lotus Feet! May the blessings of Siva and Hari be upon us all!

3. WHAT IS KARMA?

Karma means work or action. According to Rishi Jaimini, rituals like Agnihotra, Yajnas, etc., are termed Karmas. There is a hidden power in Karma termed 'Adrishta', which brings in fruits of Karmas for the individual. Karma is all in all for Jaimini. Karma is everything for a student of the Mimamsic school of thought. Jaimini is the founder of Poorva Mimamsa. He was a student of Maharishi Vyasa, the founder of Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta. The Mimamsa school denies the existence of Ishwara, who awards the fruits of works. According to the Gita, any action is a Karma. Charity, sacrifice and Tapas are all Karmas. In a philosophical sense, even breathing, seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, smelling, walking, talking, etc., are all Karmas. Thinking is the real Karma. Raga-dwesha (likes and dislikes) constitute real Karma.

4. RIGHT AND WRONG ACTION

Have right thinking. Use your reason and commonsense. Follow the injunctions of the Sastras. Consult the Code of Manu or Yajnavalkya Smriti whenever you have doubts. You will be able to find out whether you are doing right or wrong action. If you say:

"Sastras are countless. They are like the ocean. I can hardly understand the truths that are inculcated there. I cannot fathom out and guage their depths. There are contradictions. I am puzzled and bewildered," then strictly follow the words of a Guru in whom you can place absolute faith and confidence. The third way is to have fear of God. Consult your conscience. The shrill, inner voice can guide you. As soon as you hear the voice, do not delay even for a moment. Start the action diligently without consulting anybody. Practise to hear the inner voice in the morning at 4 a.m. If there are fear, shame, doubt, pricking of the conscience, and uneasiness of mind, know that you are doing wrong. If there are joy, exhiliration and satisfaction, understand that you are doing a right action.

5. NISHKAMYA KARMA YOGA

In the practice of Nishkamya Karma Yoga, there is no loss of effort. There is no harm. There is no transgression also. Even a little of this knowledge, even a little practice can protect you from great fear of birth and death with its concomitant evils. You will doubtless reap the fruits in this path of Karma Yoga, *viz.*, Jnana. There is no uncertainty here. Matter is indestructible. Energy is indestructible. Even a little practice with the right mental attitude will purify the Chitta. The Samskaras of virtuous

actions are imbedded in the Chitta. They are also indestructible. They are real, valuable assets for you. They will prevent you from doing wrong actions. They will goad you to do selfless actions. They will push you on to the goal. Selfless works will prepare the ground of Antahkarana for the reception of the seed of Jnana. The path of Karma Yoga eventually leads to the attainment of infinite bliss of the Self.

Work unselfishly with disinterested spirit. Always scrutinise your motives. Your motive should be pure. The fruits of actions vary according to the motive. Listen to this story: In Hanuman Ghat two girls were in a drowning condition. Two young men jumped immediately into the Ganges and rescued them. One man asked the girl to marry him The other man said: "I have done my duty. God gave me an opportunity to serve and improve myself." He had Chitta Suddhi. The external action is the same (the act of saving the life) but the motive is different. The fruits also must be different. Never care for the fruits of your actions. But do not become a victim of sloth or inertia. Pour forth all your energies in the service of humanity, country, etc Plunge yourself in selfless service.

Fix your mind at the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Give the hands to work. Even when you work, work like the typist or the harmonium player who types or plays while talking to you, like the woman who knits and talks at the same time. Let your mind be ever

attached to the Lotus Feet of the Lord while your hands are at work. The mind of the girl who has the water-pot on her head, is on the pot even though she talks and jokes with her comrades while walking along the road. You will be able to do two things at a time by practice. The manual work will become automatic, mechanical or instinctive. You will have two minds. A portion of the mind will be at work, while the rest of the mind will be in the service of the Lord, in meditation, in Japa. Repeat the Name of the Lord while at work also. Ashtavadhanis do eight things at a time. They play at cards, move the man in Chaturanga play (chess), dictate some passages to a third man, talk to a fourth in order and continuation, and so on. This is a question of training of the mind. Even so you can so train the mind that it can work with the hands and can remember God at the same time. This is Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga combined.

Lord Krishna says:

Tasmat Sarveshu Kaleshu mamanusmara yudhya cha; mayyarpitamanobuddhir mamevaishyai asamsayah.

"Therefore at all times think upon Me and fight with mind and reason set on Me, without doubt thou shalt come unto Me." Gita: Chapter VIII-7.

Though the cow grazes in the pasture having been separated from the calf, her mind is always fixed on

the calf only. Similarly you should fix the mind on God when you do Japa, like the cow, and give your hands to work, which is only worship of the Lord. Renounce all attachment. Be balanced in success or failure, gain or loss, victory or defeat, pleasure or pain. Train and discipline your mind cautiously. This is your master-key to open the doors of the realms of bliss. This is the secret of Karma Yoga. This is the secret of success in Yoga. Here is also another interesting illustration. The mind of the Ayah is always on her own child though she fondles and caresses the child of the zamindar for the time being. The mind of the Choranari is always on her paramour though she is busy doing her househuld duties at her home. Even so, fix the mind at the Lotus Feet of the Lord and give the hands to worldly activities. You can realize God even while remaining in the world if you adopt this method. You need not retire to Himalayan caves and forests. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says: "Renunciation and Yoga of action both lead to the highest bliss; of the two, Yoga of action is verily better than renunciation of action." Gita: Chapter V-2.

If you care for the fruits of actions you will be caught up in the wheel of birth and death. You cannot expect to attain immortality immediately or the final beatitude.

Mind is so framed that it cannot work without expectation of fruits or anticipation of rewards for

actions. If you smile when you meet your friend, you do expect a smile in return from him. If you give a cup of water to somebody, you do expect something in return from him. If you salute your friend on Mount Road, you expect him to salute you in return. This is the inborn nature of worldly-minded people. You will have to train the mind to work disinterestedly. You will have to tame the mind cautiously. You will have to discipline the mind with patience and perseverance. Worldly-minded people cannot understand the spirit of Nishkamya service as their minds are charged or saturated with impurities. Do service for sometime. Then you will grasp the spirit of Nishkamya Karma Yoga. In the beginning all your actions may be selfish. But if you work hard in the field of Karma Yoga for two years, five of your actions will be unselfish and ninty-five will be selfish. Scrutinise your motives, purify them and try hard. After some years of incessant struggle, fifty actions will become unselfish. A good time will come when all your actions, hundred per cent, will be purely unselfish. You will become a perfect Karma Yogi like Raja Janaka. The time is not very far if you keep up the ideal before you daily and struggle hard to reach the ideal, and if you are sincere and earnest in your purpose.

The mind is filled with purity (Sattwa) if you work without expectation of fruits, if you work for the sake of God, if you regard work as worship or

Puja of Narayan, if you dedicate all your actions to God as Ishwararpana. Feel and think that you breathe, live and work for God alone every second of your life, and that, without Him, life is absolutely useless. Feel the pangs of separation while at work if you forget Him even for a fraction of a second.

6. KARMA YOGA: A MEANS TO KNOWLEDGE

The practice of Nishkamya Karma Yoga destroys sins and impurities of the mind and causes Chitta Suddhi or purity of the Antahkarana. Knowledge of the Self dawns in a pure mind. Knowledge of the Self is the only direct means to freedom. As cooking is not possible without fire so is emancipation not possible without knowledge of the Self. Karma cannot destroy ignorance because they are not hostile to each other. But knowledge certainly destroys ignorance as light destroys the thickest darkness.

You will find in the Mahabharata: "Knowledge springs in men on the destruction of sinful Karma when the self is seen in the Self, as in a clear mirror." Santi Parva: 204-8.

In the following passages Karma Yoga is pointed out as a means to the attainment of Atma Jnana:

"The Brahmanas seek to know this (Atman) by the study of the Vedas, by Yajna or worship." Brih. Upanishad: 4-5-22.

"But without Yoga, O mighty-armed, renunciation is hard to obtain." Gita: Chapter V-6.

"Having abandoned attachment, Yogins perform action for the purification of the self." Gita: Chapter V-11.

"Sacrifice, gift and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise." Gita: Chapter XVIII-5.

7. QUALIFICATIONS OF A KARMA YOGI

A Karma Yogi should be absolutely free from lust, greed, anger and egoism. Even if there are traces of these Doshas, he should try to remove them. He should not expect any kind of fruits for his actions herein and hereafter. He should not have any desire for name and fame, approbation, appreciation, thirst for applause, admiration and gratitude. He must have a spotless character. He should try to possess this gradually. He should be humble and free from hatred, jealousy, harshness, etc. He should always speak sweet words. How can a proud and jealous man, who expects respect and honour from others, serve others? He should be absolutely fearless. A timid man is absolutely unfit for Karma Yoga. He is fit to assist his wife in cleaning utensils in the kitchen in the morning and in washing her clothes in the evening.

A Karma Yogi should have an amiable, loving, sociable nature. He should be able to move and mix with everybody without distinction of caste, creed or colour. He should have perfect adaptability, mercy and cosmic love. He should be sympathetic and tolerant. He should be able to adjust himself to the

habits and ways of others. He should have an all-embracing and all-inclusive heart. He should always have a cool and balanced mind. He should have presence of mind also. He should have equal vision. He should rejoice in the welfare of others. A man who is easily irritated and who can be easily offended over trifling things is absolutely unfit for the path of Karma Yoga. He should have all the organs under perfect control. He should lead a very simple life. If he leads a life of luxury, if he wants everything for himself, how can he share his possessions with others? He should burn his selfishness to the very root. Let me remind you once more of the words of the Gita:

Samniyamendriyagramam sarvatra samabuddhayah
Te prapnuvanti mameva sarvabhutahite rataah.

"Restraining and subduing the senses, regarding everything equally, in the welfare of all rejoicing, these also come to Me." Gita: Chapter XII-4.

A Karma Yogi should have a sound, healthy and strong physical body. How can he serve others if he has a poor physique and a dilapidated frame? He should take great care of the body, but he should not have the least Moha or attachment for it. He should never say: "This body is mine." Even the jackals and fish claim: "This body is ours." He should be ever ready to sacrifice his body for a noble cause. He should do regular Pranayama, physical exercise and

Asanas to keep up a high standard of health. He should take good, nourishing and substantial food.

He should bear insult, disrespect, dishonour, harsh words, censure, infamy, disgrace, heat and cold, and the pain of diseases. He should have power of endurance. He should have absolute faith in himself, in God, in the scriptures and in the words of his Guru. Such a man only can become a good Karma Yogi. Such a man only can do real and useful service to the country and to suffering humanity. It is always difficult to find an ideal Adhikari. Even if you possess a few of the above qualifications, the other qualifications will come to you by themselves, when you earnestly work in the field of Karma Yoga. You need not be discouraged. Plunge yourself in the service of God. Forget the body. March boldly in the field with Prem and Shraddha. Blow the bugle with the feeling: "I must become a true Karma Yogi now." All virtues will cling to you by themselves. Apply yourself diligently right now from this very second. Become an ideal Karma Yogi like Janaka or Buddha. May God bless you with inner strength, faith, virtues and the spirit of self-sacrifice.

Start the work even with a little capital of some love, mercy and sympathy. Enter the field at once. You will draw inspiration from the leaders in the field. The astral or invisible helpers, Nitya Siddhas, Amara-Purushas and your colleagues will push you on. After sometime, you will become a wonderful

Karma Yogi. Fearlessness, humility and all other virtues will shine in you by themselves now.

8. WORK IS WORSHIP

Work is worship. Work is meditation. Serve all with intense love without any idea of agency and without expectation of fruits or reward. You will realize God. Service of humanity is service of God.

Work elevates when done in the right spirit without attachment or egoism. If you are a Bhakta (devotee), feel you are a Nimitta or instrument in the hands of God. If you adopt the path of Jnana, feel that you are a silent Sakshi (witness) and that Prakriti does everything. All work is sacred. There is no menial work from the highest view-point (from the view-point of the Absolute, from the view-point of Karma Yoga). Even scavengering, when done with the right mental attitude as described above, will become a Yogic activity for God-realization.

It is selfishness that has deplorably contracted your heart. Selfishness is the bane of human life. Selfishness clouds the understanding. Selfishness is petty-mindedness. Bhoga (sensual enjoyment) increases selfishness and selfish Pravritti. It is the root cause of human sufferings. Real spiritual progress starts with selfless service.

Serve Sadhus, Sannyasins, Bhaktas, the poor and sick people with Bhav, Prem and Bhakti. The Lord is seated in the hearts of all.

Ishwarah sarvabhutanam hriddese Arjuna tishthati bhramayan sarvabhutani yantraroodhani mayaya.

"The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, and by His illusive power, causes all beings to revolve as though mounted on a potter's wheel." Gita: Chapter XVIII-61.

The spirit of service must be deeply ingrained in your very bones, cells, tissues and nerves. The reward is invaluable. Practise and feel the cosmic expansion and infinite Ananda (bliss). Tall talk and idle gossiping will not do, my dear friends. Evince intense zeal and enthusiasm for work. Be fiery in the spirit of service.

Have Nishtha with God and Chesta with hands like the Bahurupi who has Nishtha of a male and Chesta of a female. You will be able to do two things at a time through gradual practice. Repeat the Name of the Lord while at work. Karma Yoga is generally combined with Bhakti Yoga. A Karma Yogi offers to the Lord as an oblation (Ishwara Pranidhana) whatever he does through the Karma Indriyas (organs of action).

A Karma Yogi does not expect even a return of love, appreciation, gratitude or admiration from the people whom he is serving.

In the beginning, all your Karmas may not be of the pure Nishkamya type. Some may be Sakamya (with expectation). Some may be Nishkamya. You

must be very vigilant in scrutinising your motives during action. You must be ever introspective. By and by, when the heart becomes purer and purer through constant work, your actions will be perfectly disinterested and selfless.

In the mind there are three Doshas, *viz.*, Mala (impurities like lust, wrath, greed, etc.), Vikshepa (tossing of the mind), and Avarana (veil of ignorance). Mala is removed through Nishkamya Karma Yoga; Vikshepa by means of Upasana (worship); and Avarana by means of study of Vedantic literature and Jnana. Karma Yoga gives Chitta Suddhi. It purifies the heart and prepares the mind for the dawn of knowledge (Jnana Udaya).

Only he who has reduced his wants and controlled his Indriyas can do Karma Yoga. How can a man of luxury, with his Indriyas revolting, serve others? He wants everything for himself, and wants to exploit and domineer over others. Another qualification is that he must have a balanced mind. He must be free from Raga-dwesha (likes and dislikes) also. "An action which is ordained, done by one who is undesirous of fruit, devoid of attachment, without love or hate—that is called pure." Gita: Chapter XVIII-23.

You must learn the secret of renunciation or the abandonment of the fruits of action. Long is the lesson, toilsome the practice. You have to combine energy in work, with indifference to the result

the work.

Kill ambition, kill desire of life, kill desire for comfort. Work as those work who are ambitious. Respect life as those do who desire it Be happy as those who live for happines.

The reconcilement of these opposites is the secret of renunciation. All who seek power, life or comfort, perform actions with a view to obtaining and enjoying these fruits, and they direct their activities to this end. The fruit is the motive for exertion and the longing of it inspires the effort.

Aspirants must work as energetically as the children of this world, but they must substitute a new motive; they work that the divine law may be fulfilled, that the divine purpose may be promoted, that the Will of God may be carried out in every direction. This is the new motive and it is one of the all-compelling forces; they work for God alone. Thus acting they create no Karma-bond for it is desire that binds.

Now, the attainment of renunciation is difficult and requires prolonged and patient practice. The probationer will begin by trying to be careless of the results brought to him personally by his actions; he will try to do his very best and then rid himself of all feeling as to the reaction on himself, taking equally whatever comes. If success follows, he will check the feeling of elation; if failure, he will not permit depression to master him. Persistently he will

repeat his efforts, until by slow degrees he finds that he is beginning to care little for retards (or falls) while he has lost no whit of his energy and painstaking in his actions. He will not seek external activities, but will do his best with every duty that comes in his way and will begin to show the balanced state of mind which marks the crowning strength and detachment of the soul.

He will hasten the attainment of these through a cool estimation of the value of the earth's so-called prices, and will meditate on their transitory nature, the anxiety and unrest of those whose hearts are fixed on them, and the emptiness of them when finally grasped and held, the satiety that follows close on the heels of possession. The intellectual appreciation of them will come to his help in disappointment and restrain him in success, and so aid him in giving more equilibrium. Here is a field of daily effort which will demand his energies for years.

The probationer must remember that much of his work consists in practising the precepts laid down by all earnest religionists.

9. YOGA OF EQUANIMITY

Worldly people are generally elated by success and depressed by failure. Elation and depression are the attributes of the mind. If you want to become a real Karma Yogi in the right sense of the term, you will have to keep a balanced mind at all times, in all con-

ditions and under all circumstances. This is no doubt very difficult. But you will have to do it anyhow. Then only will you have peace of mind and real lasting happiness. He who keeps a balanced mind is a Jnani. Karma Yoga prepares the mind for the attainment of Jnana. That is the beauty of Karma Yoga. That is the secret and essence of Karma Yoga.

There must not be the least attachment to any kind of work. You must be ready to leave any work at any time. There may be a divine call upon you for certain work. You will have to take it up at once without grumbling, whatever may the nature of the work be, whether you are willing or not. You will have to stop it also, if conditions and circumstances demand you to do so. This is Yoga. There is no attachment to the work here.

Many people get attached to the work. They like some kind of work and they take interest in it. They dislike some other kind of work. They are unwilling to leave it also, if conditions want it to be stopped. They take undue responsibility on their shoulders, pine and labour under care, worries and anxieties. This is not Yoga at all, because there is attachment to the work owing to the quality of Rajas. Worldly people always work with attachment. Hence they suffer. If there is a divine call, you may start a world-wide movement. You must be prepared to stop it at any time if God wills, even though you do not get any success here. It is not your lookout to get success

or failure. Simply obey the divine call and act like a soldier on the battlefield. There is great joy in such kind of work because there is no personal element here.

Keep the reason rooted in the Self. Have a poised mind amidst the changes of the world. Work for the fulfilment of purposes divine. Do not expect any fruit. Do everything as Ishwararpana. Work for the welfare of the world in unison with the Divine Will. Allow the divine energy to work unhampered through your instruments. The moment your egoism comes in, there will be immediate blocking of the free flow of the divine energy. Make your Indriyas perfect instruments for His Lila. Keep the body-flute hollow by emptying it of your egoism. Then the Flute-Bearer of Brindavan will play freely through this body-flute. He will work through your instruments. Then you will feel the lightness of the work. You will feel that God works through you. You will be washed of all the responsibilities You will be as free as a bird. You will feel that you are quite a changed being. Your egoism will try to re-enter. Be careful. Be on the alert. By gradual practice and purification of the mind you will become an expert in Karma Yoga. All your actions will be perfect and selfless. All actions will eventually culminate in Jnana. This is the Yoga of equanimity.

This kind of Yoga is inculcated by Lord Krishna in His teachings:

Yogasthah Kuru Karmani Sangam Tyaktva Dhananjaya
Sidhyasidhyoh Samo Bhutva, Samatvam Yoga Uchyate.

"Perform action, O Dhananjaya, dwelling in union with the Divine, renouncing attachments, and balanced evenly in success and failure; equilibrium is Yoga." Gita: Chapter II-48.

You will have to leave even such subtle attachment as: "May God be pleased." Work merely for the sake of the Lord. Then even eating, walking, talking, sleeping, breathing and answering calls of nature will become Yogic activity. Work becomes worship. This is the great secret. You will have to learn it by gradual practice in the field of Karma Yoga. You will have to spiritualize all your actions. You will have to transmute all your actions into Yoga by practice. Mere theorising will not do. Understand the secrets of Karma Yoga. Work unselfishly. Become a true Karma Yogi and enjoy the infinite bliss of the Atman.

Merit and demerit, Punya and Papa, do not affect that Karma Yogi who has evenness or equanimity of mind, for he exults not over the good fruit of the one nor worries over the bad fruit of the other. He has equanimity of mind in success and failure. His mind is always resting in God all the while. Works which are of a binding nature lose that character when performed with a balanced mind. The Karma

Yogi has no attachment to sensual objects. He has purified his mind by constant selfless service. He has given up all idea of agency. He treats the body as an instrument of God, given to him for the fulfilment of His purpose. He attributes all activities to the Divine Actor within. He who is established in the Yoga of equanimity becomes an expert in the science of Karma Yoga. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says:

Buddhiyukto jaha teeha ubhe sukritadushkrite,
tasmat yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kausalam.

"United to the pure reason, one abandoneth here both good and evil deeds: therefore cleave thou to Yoga; Yoga is skill in action." Gita: Chapter II-50.

The Karma Yogi who possesses evenness of mind casts off the fruits of actions. He escapes from good and bad births. Clinging to fruit only is the cause of rebirth. When all actions are performed for God's sake in fulfilment of His purpose without desire for fruit, the Karma Yogi gets illumination. He shakes off the bondage of birth. He attains knowledge of Brahman and through Brahma Jnana, liberation or Moksha. In the Gita you will find:

Karmajam buddhiyukta hi phalam tyaktva manishinah,
Janmabandhavinirmuktah padam gachchanti anamayam.

"The sages, united to the pure reason, renounce the fruit which action yieldeth, and, liberated from the bonds of birth, they go to the blissful seat." Gita: Chapter II-51.

10. POISED REASON

Actions which are of a binding nature lose that nature when you do them with equanimity or evenness of mind through the help of pure reason, which has lost all attachment to sensual objects and which is resting in the Self. You will have to cultivate and develop this pure reason and equanimity of mind. God has given this marvellous machine to man for service of humanity and thereby attaining an immortal life. If he uses this body for satisfaction of petty desires and selfish ends, he becomes an object of pity and condemnation. He is caught up in the wheel of birth and death. Rest the mind in the Self or Ishwara when you perform any action. He who has developed pure poised reason and who is resting in the Self, is quite aware that all actions are done by the Divine Actor within (Antaryamin). He is perfectly conscious that God really operates in this body-machine and moves this machine. This Yogi of equanimity or evenness of mind now understands fully the fundamental principles that govern all bodily actions. He performs all actions for God's sake in fulfilment of His purpose without desire for fruit and eventually attains the everlasting peace.

11. WORK WITHOUT ANY MOTIVE

Man generally plans to get the fruits of his works before he starts any kind of work. The mind is so framed that it cannot think of any kind of work without remuneration or reward. This is due to Rajas. Human Swabhava is always like this. When discrimination dawns, when the mind is filled with some more Sattwa or purity, this nature changes slowly. The spirit of selflessness slowly creeps in. The quality of Rajas creates selfishness and attachment. A selfish man has no large heart. He has no ideal. He is petty-minded. His mind is full of greed. He always calculates. He cannot do any service in a magnanimous manner. He will say. "I will get so much money. I must put forth so much work only." He will *weigh the work and money in a balance. He cannot* do a little more work. He will be ever watching the time for stopping his work. He is mercenary. He is hired for money. He is actuated by the hope of reward. He is greedy of gain. Selfless service is unknown to him. He has no idea of God. He has no glimpse of Truth. He cannot imagine of an expanded, selfless life He has got into a narrow, circumscribed circle or groove. He dwells within this small grove. His love extends to his own body, his wife and children. That is all. Generosity is unknown to him.

If you expect fruits for your actions, you will have to come back into this world to enjoy such fruits.

You will have to take birth again. A Nishkamya Karma Yogi says: "Do all works without expectation of fruits. This will produce Chitta Suddhi. Then you will get knowledge of the Self. You will get Moksha or eternal bliss, peace and immortality." This is his doctrine. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says to Arjuna:

Karmanyeva adhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana
Ma karmaphalahetur bhurma te sangostvakarmani.

"Thy business is with the action only, never with its fruits; so let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor be thou to inaction attached." Gita: Chapter II-47.

God dispenses the fruits of actions according to the motive. If the motive is pure, you will get Divine Grace and purity. If the motive is impure, you will get rebirth in this Mrityuloka to reap the fruits of your actions. Again you will do virtuous and vicious actions through the force of Raga-dwesha. You will be entrapped in the never-ending wheel of birth and death.

But you should not remain in a state of inertia also (Akarmani) thinking that you will not get the fruits if you work selflessly. You must not say: "What is the use of my work now? I can't get any fruits. I will keep quiet." This is also bad. You will become Tamasic and dull. There will be mental inactivity. You will get purity of mind if you work

in the spirit of Nishkamya Karma Yoga. This is a very great reward for your actions. You cannot imagine the exalted condition of a man of pure mind. He has unbounded peace, strength and joy. He is very near God. He is dear to God. He will soon receive the divine light. Work without any sort of motive and feel its effects, purity and inner strength. What an expanded heart you will have! Indescribable! Practise, feel and enjoy this state.

12. NO LOSS IN KARMA YOGA

You do not lose anything in *Karma Yoga*. Even if you do a little service to the country or to the society or to poor sick people, it brings its own advantages and benefits. It purifies your heart and prepares the *Antahkarana* for the reception of knowledge of Atma. The Samskaras or impressions of these good actions are indelibly imbedded in your subconscious mind. The force of these Samskaras will again propel you to do some more good actions. Sympathy, love, the spirit of patriotism and service will be developed. Nothing is lost when the candle burns.

In agriculture you may manure and plough the land. Your efforts will be rendered futile if you do not get rain in the year. This is not the case in Nishkamya Karma Yoga. There is no uncertainty here regarding the result of any effort. Further there

is not the least chance of getting harmed by practising this Karma Yoga. If the doctor is injudicious, if he administers the medicine in over-dosage, some harm will certainly result. This is not the case in the practice of Karma Yoga. Even if you do a little service, even if you practise a little Nishkamya Karma Yoga in any form, it will save you from great fear, from the fear of Samsara and of birth and death with its concomitant evils. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says to Arjuna:

Nehaabhikramanaasosti pratyavaayo na vidyate
Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat.

"There is no loss of effort here, there is no harm. Even a little of this service delivers one from great fear." Gita: Chapter II-40.

The path of Karma Yoga, which eventually leads to the attainment of the infinite bliss of the Self, cannot be futile.

Ignorant people say that one cannot work without any motive. It is a great pity that they have not understood the essence and truth of Karma Yoga. Their minds are saturated with all sorts of fantastic desires and selfishness, and as a result, their minds are very impure and clouded. They cannot grasp the underlying truth of Karma Yoga. They judge others from their own standpoint. Selflessness is a thing unknown to them. Their minds and brains are

rendered callous and so they cannot vibrate properly to understand what a motiveless action is. Passionate householders cannot dream of doing any work without expecting some gain for themselves and their families.

When the thought of doing good becomes part and parcel of a man's very being, he will not entertain any motive at all. He takes immense delight in serving others, in doing good to others. There is a peculiar joy and Ananda in the practice of vigorous Karma Yoga. The Karma Yogi gets inner spiritual strength and power by performing motiveless and selfless actions.

He should understand the secret of Karma Yoga. He should plunge himself in selfless work. He must work incessantly. He must nurse people with Atma Bhav. He must serve society in a variety of ways. Gradually he will understand the glory and splendour of unselfish work. He will become a changed being with divine effulgence and sweet Yogic fragrance. Many of his actions may be selfish in the beginning of his Yogic career. It does not matter. He should not *be discouraged on this score. But, slowly when he* grows in purity, some of his actions will turn out to be unselfish. In the long run all his actions will be unselfish. He should patiently work with indefatigable energy. He has to destroy his old mind of selfishness and build a new mind of selflessness. This is doubtless up-hill work. This demands struggle

and constant effort with asinine patience and iron determination. Selfless work elevates and brings freedom. Selfish work retards spiritual progress and fastens one more chain to your feet. If you find it difficult to work without any motive, have one strong motive for freedom when you work. This will not bind you. This will destroy all other lower selfish motives and will eventually die by itself, just as the stick used in burning a dead body burns the dead body and is itself consumed in the end. The joy of a developed Karma Yogi is really unbounded. Words cannot adequately describe his exalted state and inward happiness.

Look at the stupendous and magnanimous work turned out by Lord Buddha, Sri Sankara and other Karma Yogis of yore. Their names are handed down from posterity to posterity. Their names are still remembered. The whole world worships them with reverence. Can you attribute an iota or grain of selfish motive to their actions? They lived for doing service to others. They were examples of absolute self-abnegation.

Expand. Purify your heart. Live in the true spirit of Karma Yoga. Live every second for the realization of the ideal and goal of life. Then and then alone will you realize the true glory of Karma Yoga. Keep before you the examples of the great Karma Yogis who served mankind and thus radiated peace, bliss and wisdom unto all.

13. HEALTH AND YOGA

What is health? It is a state of equilibrium of the three humours of the body, *viz.*, Vata, Pitta and Kapha (wind, bile and phlegm), wherein the mind and all the organs of the body work in harmony and concord, and the man enjoys peace and happiness, and performs his duties of life with comfort and ease. It is that condition in which man has a good digestion and a good appetite, normal breathing and pulse, a good quantity and quality of blood, strong nerves and a calm mind, a sound mind in a sound body, a free movement of bowels, normal state of urine, rosy cheeks, shining face and sparkling eyes. It is that state in which a man jumps, sings, smiles, laughs, whistles and moves about hither and thither with joy and ecstasy. It is that condition in which he can think properly, speak properly and act with alacrity, nimbleness and vigilance.

This desirable state is coveted by all. A life with good health is a great blessing indeed. What is the earthly use of wealth and possession, if a man cannot eat well on account of disease of his stomach, if he cannot walk on account of rheumatism or paralysis, if he cannot see the beautiful scenery of nature on account of cataract or any defective vision, if he cannot copulate on account of impotency. A great thinker says: "Give me health and a day: I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous." Life without good

health is a miserable condition, even if one is the Lord of the whole earth.

Man enjoys good health on account of good Karmas done in his previous birth. He who has done meritorious services in his previous incarnation, he who has shared what he had with others, he who has helped the poor and the needy, he who has done worship, meditation, Yogic Kriyas and Pranayama in his previous birth, enjoys sound health in this birth. The law of causation is inexorable and unrelenting.

What is the greatest thing that a man can achieve in this world? It is Self-realization. What are the advantages or benefits of Self-realization? Why should we attempt Self-realization at all? The attainment of Atma Jnana or realization of the identity of the Jiva (individual soul) and Brahman (supreme soul) can alone put an end to the wheel of birth and death with its concomitant evils of disease, old age, pain, suffering, worries and various other sorts of trouble. It is Atma Jnana alone that can give you unalloyed eternal bliss, supreme peace, highest knowledge and immortality .

The next question is, why should we have good health? We should have good health in order that we may achieve the four kinds of Purushartha—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (righteousness, wealth, desires and liberation). If you do virtuous deeds, you will get wealth and you can gratify your worldly desires. Then you can attempt realization of

the Self. Without good health you cannot achieve anything. Without good health you cannot perform any service of Nishkamya Karma Yoga. Without good health you cannot do Asanas and Pranayama. That is the reason why scriptures declare that this body is a boat to cross the ocean of Samsara, an instrument for doing virtuous deeds and attaining Moksha. That is the reason why, in Charaka Samhita you will find: *Dharmartha Kamamokshanam Arogyam moolam uttamam*—health is the best thing in this world.

An aspirant should be free from Adhi and Vyadhi (diseases of the mind and the body), if he wants to do Karma Yoga and attain knowledge of the Self. According to the science of Yoga all physical diseases take their origin in the diseases of the mind, from an unhealthy state of mind. The Western psychologists also corroborate this fact. They say that the diseases of the body are attributable to hatred, anger, worry, depression, etc., which corrode the mind and react on the body and bring about various physical diseases by destroying the cells of the body.

A student of Karma Yoga should have an elementary knowledge of Raja Yoga, psychology, Ayurveda, physiology, family medicine, hygiene, Sankhya and Vedanta. Then he will be able to turn out more real work easily. He can have a knowledge of the laws of the mind, also the nature, habits and ways of the mind. He will be in a position to keep a calm and

healthy mind always. No one can work smoothly with a ruffled mind. A ruffled mind disturbs the three humours of the body and brings diseases in its turn. This is the theory of Ayurveda which quite tallies with the theory of Raja Yoga and the theory of Western psychologists. He can have an understanding of the laws of the universe and the operation of the world by having a knowledge of the Sankhya philosophy of Kapila Muni. An elementary knowledge of astrology is of immense value. The various Ritus or seasons are brought about by the movement of the earth round the sun. The atmospheric conditions affect the body of man. The planets have an influence on the mind and body of a man. They exercise benign or malevolent influence on him in accordance with their position in the various houses. He who has some knowledge of astrology can ward off the evil effects of unfavourable planets.

At every second various kinds of vibrations from the various kinds of objects of the physical universe outside enter the mind of a man and produce various influence. The body is part of the universe. So is the mind. What is called world is only mind. The mind of a man is affected by the thoughts and opinions of others. There is pressure of thought from outside. All people entertain personal thoughts and the Karma Yogi should have immense strength to act against these outside thoughts. He should have courage. He should have patience and perseverance. Even if he

fails twenty times he should stick to his work with determination and leech-like tenacity, adamantine will and asinine patience. Then only will he have perfect success in the end. He will come out of the field with spiritual laurels, Atmic victory and Atmic Swarajya.

Study of Sankhya philosophy will give you a knowledge of the creation of the universe, how the mind is formed, how the organs of action and sensation are formed, what are Tanmatras or rudimentary root elements, what is Mahat-tattwa, what is Purusha and Prakriti, what are the three Gunas, how they operate and influence a man, how they affect the health and mentality of a man and how to get knowledge of the Purusha. Sankhya and Yoga of Patanjali are complimentary. Vedanta is only an amplification and fulfilment of Sankhya.

Good physical health can be achieved and also maintained by observing rigidly the laws of health and the rules of hygiene, by taking wholesome, light, substantial, easily digestible, nutritious, bland food or Sattwic diet, and by inhaling pure air, by regular exercise, by daily cold bath, by observing moderation in eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, etc. Good mental health can be attained and maintained by Japa, meditation, Brahmacharya, practice of Yama and Niyama and right conduct, right thinking, right speaking and right action, Atma Vichara, change of thought, relaxation of mind by dwelling the mind on

wisdom.

Do you expect anything from your small son, if you do something for him? In a similar manner you will have to work for others also without expecting anything. You will have to expand your heart and think that this whole world is your own Self. It gives you a little pain in the beginning because you have never worked up to this time in this line of selfless and disinterested service. When you have tasted a bit of the bliss of Karma Yoga, you can never leave it. The force of Karma Yoga will induce you to work more and more with great zeal and enthusiasm. You will begin to feel that this world is a manifestation of God. You will gain immense inner strength and purity of heart. You heart will be filled with mercy, sympathy and pure love. Your spirit of self-sacrifice will grow *ad infinitum*. Selfishness of all sorts will be annihilated. Those who work in the public field for the welfare of the country and suffering humanity can realize the truth of this statement.

Non-attachment is dispassion or indifference to the sensual enjoyments. Non-attachment is *Ihamutrartha-phalabhogaviraga*—indifference to sensual pleasures of all kinds, herein and hereafter, which is one of the items in Sadhana Chatushtaya, or the four means of salvation for the aspirant on the path of Jnana Yoga or Vedanta. It is purely a mental state. The binding link is really in the mind. Ahamta and Mamata are the two poisonous fangs of the mind-

serpent. Extract these two teeth and the serpent-*mind is tamed. There can be no bondage. It is* the mind that creates the ideas of 'I-ness' and 'mine-ness'. It is the mind that links the Jiva and the man thinks: "*I am the body.*" *It is the mind* that causes attachment to wife, son and property. If the binding link in the mind is destroyed, you can remain wherever you like. You can roam about peacefully in any part of the world unattached, like water on the lotus-leaf. Nothing can bind you. The whole mischief is wrought by the mind. A man may rule a vast dominion and yet he can be unattached. Queen Chudalai and Raja Janaka had not a bit of attachment for their wealth and estate. Janaka said: "Even if the whole of Mithila is burnt, nothing of mine will be lost." Look at the exalted mental state of Janaka! *He was resting in his* own Swaroopa or essential nature. He had not a bit of attachment. The mental state of Chudalai also was the same as that of Janaka. Though Sikhidhwaja, the husband of Chudalai, lived in the forest with a piece of Kowpeen and a Kamandalu, his mind was full of *attachment. He was attached to his body and his* Kamandalu. A man may be intensely attached to a small piece of Kowpeen or a stick or a small tumbler or to his body, although he has left his family and property. At the time of death the mental pictures of a tumbler or stick only will come to his mind. Jada Bharata was attached to the deer, and the thought of the deer only came to his mind at tl

time of his death and he had to take the birth of a deer. Such is the power of attachment.

Worldly people generally judge the state of dispassion of a Sadhu from external conditions. If a Sadhu has one Kowpeen and a long beard and matted hair, he is regarded as a first-class Virakta Mahatma. This man may fight with another Sadhu for his share when a pilgrim distributes an eight-anna piece to them. His mind may be full of passion and attachment. Householders are deceived. Some hypocrites put on an external show of Vairagya just to collect money secretly. Matted hair is ingeniously glued to the head. There are experts in Benares who do this for two rupees. Householders should be very cautious and should not be led away by the external physical nudity of some Sadhus. What is wanted is mental nudity. The mind must be completely shaved. Then only can there be real non-attachment.

The mental state of non-attachment to the fruits of works can be achieved by two ways. The student of Vedanta or Jnana Yoga develops Sakshi Bhava through discrimination and self-analysis. He says: "I am the silent witness of the mental modifications and the works done by the different organs of the body. I am distinct from the body, organs, mind and Prana. The Prakriti does everything. The Gunas operate. The Swabhava functions. The Indriyas do their respective Dharmas. Everything is the Dharma of the mind. I have nothing to do. I am an Udaseena. I am

quite indifferent. I am mere Tatastha. I do not want any fruits. This world is Anitya and Mithya. There is no real happiness in this world. There are countless Doshas in worldly life. There is supreme, eternal, infinite bliss in the Atman within. In reality I am Satchidananda Atman. I will utilise the Indriyas, mind, Prana and body as my instruments for the well-being of the world, for Lokasangraha. This whole world is my own Atman. It is my body. This whole universe is my home. The Atman is Nishkriya, Akarta, Niravayava and Avyavahara." He does constant Vichara and reflection in this manner and gets himself established in his own Swaroop. He burns the results of his actions in the fire of wisdom by reflecting in the above manner.

A Bhakta does self-surrender and dedicates all his actions at the Lotus Feet of the Lord as Ishwararpana unto Him. He says: "I am an instrument in the hands of my Beloved. I have no individual will. I am Thine, my Lord. All is Thine. Thy will be done. Thou art everything. Thou doest everything. Even an atom cannot move without Thee. Even a leaf cannot move without Thee. Thou workest through all my organs. Thou speakest through my mouth. I offer to Thee whatever I do or eat. I offer to Thee my Tapas and everything. Thou canst do whatever Thou likest. I live for Thee alone. I work for Thee alone. I cannot live without Thee even for a second."

Work cannot bring misery but it is the attachment

and identification to work that brings in all sorts of worries, troubles and unhappiness. Understand the secret of Karma Yoga and work without attachment and identification and you will soon attain God-consciousness. This is Jnana. This is Jnanagni (fire of wisdom) which burns all the fruits of actions.

Chapter Two

UNIVERSAL LAWS

1. LAW OF KARMA

EVERY man should have a comprehensive understanding of Nature's laws, and their operations. Then he can pull on in this world smoothly and happily. He can utilise the helping forces to serve his ends in the best possible manner. He can neutralise the hostile forces to serve his ends in the best possible manner. He can neutralise the hostile or antagonistic currents. Just as the fish swims against the current, so also he will be able to go against the hostile currents by adjusting himself properly and safeguarding himself through suitable precautionary methods. Otherwise he becomes a slave. He is tossed about hither and thither helplessly by various currents. Various hostile forces drag him in different corners. He drifts like a wooden plank in a river. He is always very miserable and unhappy although he is wealthy and possesses everything that the world can offer.

The captain of a steamer who has a mariner's compass, who has knowledge of the sea, the routes and the oceanic currents can sail smoothly. Otherwise his steamer will drift here and there helplessly and

be wrecked by being dashed against some ice-bergs or rocks. Likewise, a wise sailor in the ocean of this life, who has a detailed knowledge of the laws of Karma and Nature can sail smoothly and reach the goal of life positively. Understanding the laws of Nature, you can mould or shape your character in any way you like. "As a man thinketh so he becometh" is one of the great laws of Nature. Think you are pure, pure you will become. Think you are noble, noble you will become. Think you are a man, man you will become. Think you are Brahman, Brahman you will become.

Become an embodiment of good nature. Do good actions always. Serve, love, give. Make others happy. Live to serve others. Then you will reap happiness. You will get favourable circumstances or opportunities and environments. If you hurt others, if you do scandal-mongering, mischief-mongering, back-biting, tale-bearing, if you exploit others, if you acquire the property of others by foul means, if you do any actions that can give pain to others, you will reap pain. You will get unfavourable circumstances, conditions and environments. This is the law of Nature. Just as you can build your good or bad character by sublime or base thinking, so also you can shape your favourable or unfavourable circumstances by doing good or bad actions. A man of discrimination is always careful, vigilant and circumspect. He always watches his thoughts carefully. He

introspects. He knows exactly what is going on in his mental factory, what Vritti or Guna is prevailing at a particular time. He never allows any evil thought to the gates of his mental factory. He at once nips them in the bud.

When the mind raises its hood of Vritti, he takes the rod of Viveka and strikes at the hood. Just as the soldier kills his enemies one by one with his sword when they enter the fort, so also the man of discrimination kills the evil thought with his sword of Viveka when it tries to enter the fort of the mind. Thus he builds a noble character. He is careful in his speech. He speaks little. He speaks sweet loving words. He never utters any kind of harsh words that can affect the feelings of others. He practises Mowna (vow of silence). He develops patience, mercy and universal love. He speaks the truth. Thus he puts a check on the Vak Indriya and the impulses of speech. He uses measured words. He writes measured lines. This produces a deep and profound impression on the minds of the people. He practises Ahimsa and Brahmacharya in thought, word and deed. He practises Saucha and Arjava (straightforwardness). He tries to keep-balance of mind and to be always happy and cheerful. He keeps up Suddha Bhav. He tries the three kinds of Tapas (physical, verbal and mental) and controls his actions. He cannot do any action that is evil.

He who spreads happiness will always get such

favourable circumstances as can bring him happiness. He who spreads pain to others will, doubtless, get such unfavourable circumstances, according to the law of Nature as can bring him misery and pain. Therefore man creates his own character and circumstances. Bad character can be transmuted into good character by means of good thoughts, and unfavourable circumstances can be changed into favourable circumstances by doing good actions. O Ram! You must understand the laws of Nature and become wise and happy.

Your births and environments are determined according to the nature of your desires. Prarabdha places you in such suitable environments as are favourable for the gratification of your desires. The man is dragged to places where he can get his objects of desire. A man may be born in India as a poor Brahmin in one birth. If he desires to become a multi-millionaire, he may get his next birth in the United States of America. Suppose there is a poor intelligent boy in India. He has an intense desire to go to England for his I. C. S. examination. His desire to go in this birth cannot be fulfilled. Suppose also that there is a rich lady in England who has no son and has intense desire to get an intelligent one. The poor boy may get his next birth in London as the son of the rich lady according to the law of coincidence. He will thus have his old strong desire gratified now. God gives suitable surroundings according to the

nature of the desire of the man for his growth and evolution.

Suppose a shepherd boy gave a tumbler of water to a rich man to drink when he was very thirsty and when he could not get any water in a thick jungle. This boy may get his next birth as the son of this rich man for this little good action that he had done. But he may be ignorant because he was a shepherd boy in his previous birth. According to the nature of desire the man gets environments. The desire drags him to such places where the desired objects can be obtained. This is the law of Nature. Entertain holy desires. You will be placed in holy surroundings as Uttarakashi, Himalayas and Benares, where you can perform Tapas, Sadhana and meditation amidst holy persons and can have Self-realization. Entertain unholy desires—you will be placed in places like Paris and Hollywood where you can have cinemas, restuarants, ball-rooms, etc. It is left to you to select the desires, either holy or unholy. If you want to move as a man-beast in the streets of Paris, select the unholy desire. If you want to shine in divine glory and move as a man-god, select the holy desire.

Dr. M. H. Syed, *M.A, Ph.D, D.Litt.* writes in the *Hindu Mind*· "There is nothing which has wrought so much havoc in the practical life of the Hindus as the misconception of the Law of Karma—the eternal law of cause and effect—that works with unerring precision in all the departments of human

life. It is said that it is a gloomy doctrine and that it tends to paralyse human effort, and closes the spring of all right action. In popular language this doctrine means predestination, pure and simple. It is believed that a man is a creature of his past actions and that all his present life with its activities, joys, sorrows, pain and pleasure, success and failure, gain and loss, are predetermined by his past doings over which he has no control, and therefore he should be utterly resigned and waste no time in improving his or his neighbour's lot.

"There is only an element of truth in this attitude. In other words, it is only half a truth that is understood and followed. Unless the whole truth is grasped with regard to this doctrine, it will always prove a source of confusion and cause a great deal of harm. If Indian people are to rise from their present state of degradation and shake off the fetters of their thraldom, it is time that they clearly tried to understand the true meaning and philosophy of actions and the reign of the Law of Karma, by which the whole human race has to evolve.

"It is true that a man's present abilities are the direct outcome of his own thoughts and actions in the past: his cogitable endowments, his physical heredity, his moral and mental instincts and capacities are the results of his own thoughts and feelings of his previous births. A farmer reaps rich harvests only when he labours in his field for a long time. Unless

he cares to till the ground, sow the seed, water and manure it, he would not be in a position to enjoy the fruit of his toil. What he sows today he will reap tomorrow. This is an immutable law and holds good in everything without exception. To say that one's capacity for fresh effort and new lines of action is *paralysed or doomed by one's past doings is as futile* and groundless as to say that because one sowed yesterday, one cannot sow fresh seeds in new grounds today. The fact of the matter is that free-will is never choked and stifled by any past action. The only thing is that a man cannot achieve what he wants all at once, and without delay. The good law pays every person according to his need and in due time. The law runs its own course. The results of past actions, thoughts and feelings appear to us as effects of causes we set up from our own free choice. Similarly, we are equally free and unfettered to choose a line of action which is sure to bring its fruit in due time. A man is bound by the past debts he incurred or contracts he made. As soon as he pays up his liabilities he is once more free to choose whether he should incur fresh debt or not. Over the inevitable he has no control and if the law is to be justified, he should have no reason to complain against it. It is always open to him to mould the Karma which is in the course of making, in any way he likes. Under the security of the changeless law of cause and effect a man can serenely proceed to achieve anything he

desires to accomplish. Sooner or later he is sure to succeed in his well-directed efforts. In Nature nothing is lost. Again, as Bacon said: 'Nature is conquered by obedience.' By Nature he meant natural laws.

"If once we understand the law that guides our life and action, we shall be able to act in such a manner as to make this law our ally and help-mate rather than our adversary. So long as the conditions laid down by the law are meticulously fulfilled and observed, we have fullest certainty of our success in any direction.

"The three aspects of the Law of Karma should be grasped clearly. The first is the Sanchita Karma, the sum total and storehouse of all our actions, good or bad, in the innumerable past lives that we have left behind or from the time we began to discriminate right from wrong and thus started acting on our own responsibility and with our own initiative. The whole of it is recorded and preserved: how could it be otherwise when we live under the reign of an immutable law? The second is Prarabdha—the inevitable Karma—that portion of our Karma which is assigned to us to be worked out in a single life in relation to men and things we met and experienced in previous lives. This is also called *ripe Karma,* because it is a debt which is overdue and it is time that it should be paid in the form of sorrow and suffering, gain and loss, to the uttermost farthing, whether we like it or not. The third form is that of Kriyaman, that

Karma which is in the course of making. It is this which preserves our free-will with certain limitations and ensures our future success. Because man is made in God's image and shares divine life, he is free to act in any way he likes. By virtue of the same principle, whatever he intensely desires he is sure to accomplish in the course of time.

" 'Perform thou right action, for action is superior to inaction and in inaction even the maintenance of thy body would be impossible.' So says the Blessed Lord Sri Krishna.

"Whatever is true in the case of an individual is also true in the case of a nation, for individuals make a nation. 'As in small, so in great,' says ancient Hermes.

"The collective Karma of a race or a nation is as much a fact in Nature as an individual one. The same principles underlying the Karmic laws apply, without much wide difference, to national and collective Karma. Nations rise and fall, empires flourish and are dismembered on the same ground. The wise heads in a nation should not neglect the dominating sway of this law.

"In the midst of a national calamity it is well to remember that nothing can come to us which we have not deserved. We may not be able to see the immediate cause of the catastrophe, but it does not follow that it took place without sufficient cause.

"During the last thousand years and more many heart-rending and humiliating events occured on the soil of Mother India, devastating the whole land, robbing her sons of their precious jewels and even more precious lives.

"The incidents of our own times are too fresh in our memories to need any repetition. Have these soul-scorching incidents and cataclysms taken place without any rhyme or reason? No: there is nothing that can happen to us beyond the scope of the good and utterly just laws. In our ignorance we may not be able to trace the immediate cause with certainty, definiteness and accuracy, but this much is certain beyond the least shadow of doubt, that nothing unmerited can happen to us or to our country.

"Our own apathy, indifference, lack of patriotism, communal and caste dissensions, mutual hatred, suspicion and strife, have been the main cause of our present and past degradation.

"As our collective Karma brought on us the wrath of divine justice and fit retribution closely followed in the wake of our evil deeds, and we deservedly suffered and paid for them heavily, so we can again exert our collective will in the right direction and learn to be wise and circumspect in the light of our past bitter experience and humiliation. In the course of time, we shall again see the eclipse of downfall, servitude and thraldom, and we shall once more be free and great as our forefathers were."

2. LAW OF CAUSATION

All the phenomena of Nature are governed by one important law, the universal law of causation, which is also known by the name, the Law of Karma. The law of causation is a universal law that keeps up the inner harmony and the logical order of the universe. Man's deeds are as much subject to this law as the events and occurances in this physical plane. Karma is a Sanskrit term that comes from the root 'Kri', meaning to act, and signifies action or deed. Any physical or mental action is Karma. Thought is also Karma. Reaction that follows an action is Karma. Karma is a broad term. Attraction, repulsion, gravitation, breathing, talking, walking, seeing, hearing, eating, feeling, willing, desiring, thinking—all the actions of the body, mind and senses are Karma. Karma includes both cause and effect.

All other laws of Nature are subordinate to this fundamental law. The sun shines, the fire burns, the river flows, the wind blows, the tree blossoms and bears fruit, the mind thinks, feels and wills, the brain and the various organs like the heart, lungs, spleen and kidneys work in harmony and in strict obedience to this grand law of cause and effect. This grand law operates everywhere on the physical and mental planes. No phenomenon can escape from the operation of this mighty law.

The seed has its cause in the tree and itself

becomes in turn the cause of a tree. The grown-up father procreates a son, and the son in turn becomes a father. The cause is found in the effect and the effect is found in the cause. The effect is similar to the cause. This is the universal chain of cause and effect which has no end. No link in the chain is necessary. This world runs on this fundamental, vital law. This law is inexorable and immutable.

Scientists are carefully observing the phenomena of Nature and are trying to find out the exact causes of all that take place in Nature. The astronomer sits in his observatory with his long, powerful telescope and watches the heavenly map, and studies the stars and planets very carefully. He tries to find out the exact causes that bring about the phenomena. The reflective philosopher sits in a contemplative mood and tries to find out the cause of this world, the cause of the pains and miseries of this Samsara and the cause of the phenomena of this birth and death.

No event can occur without having a positive, definite cause at the back of it. The breaking out of war, the rise of a comet, the occurance of an earthquake or a valcanic eruption, thunder, lightning, floods, diseases of the body, fortune, misfortune—all have definite causes behind them.

If you develop a carbuncle or get a fracture of the leg or arm, this is obviously due to some bad Karma in your previous birth. The bad Karma was the cause and the carbuncle or fracture is the effect. If you get

some fortune in this birth, the cause is some good action that you must have done in your previous birth.

There is no such thing as a chance or accident. The cause is hidden or unknown, if you are not able to trace out the cause for the particular accident. This law of cause and effect is quite mysterious. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says: *Gahana karmano gaitih*—mysterious is the path of action. If your finite mind is not able to find out the cause in an accident or other incident, it does not mean that there is no cause behind such occurances.

All the physical and mental forces in Nature obey this grand law of cause and effect. The law and the Law-giver are one. The law and God are one. Nature and her laws are one. The laws of gravitation, cohesion, adhesion, attraction and repulsion, the law of like and dislike on the physical plane, the laws of relativity and contiguity, the law of association on the mental plane, all operate in strict accordance with this law of cause and effect. From the vibration of an electron to the revolution of a mighty planet, from the falling of a mango to the ground to the powerful willing of a Yogi, from the motion of a runner in athletics to the movement of radio-waves in the subtle ether, from the transmitting of a telegraphic message to the telepathic communication of a Yogi in the thought-world—every event is the effect of some invisible force that works in happy concord and

harmony with the law of cause and effect.

A close study of this law gives encouragement to the man who has lost hope, and to the desperate and ailing. Destiny is created by man's thoughts, habits and character. There is every chance of his correction and improvement by changing his thoughts and his habits. The scoundrel can become a saint, the prostitute can become a chaste lady, a beggar can become a king. This mighty law provides for all this. The Law of Karma only can explain beautifully the inequalities of this world, such as why one man is rich while another is poor, why one is wicked while another is a saint, one is very dull while another is a genius or a versatile prodigy, one is born decrepit while another is strong and healthy, etc. How can you explain these inequalities? It is all Karma. God can never be unjust or partial.

This world is a relative plane. It contains good, evil, and a mixture of good and evil. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says in the Gita:

Anishtamishtam misram cha trividham karmanah phalam.

"Good, evil and mixed—threefold is the fruit of action hereafter for the non-relinquisher." Chapter: XVIII-12.

There can be neither absolute good nor absolute evil in this world. That which gives you comfort and pleasure, that which is beneficial to you, to the world

and your neighbour, is good. That which gives you discomfort, uneasiness, pain and misery, that which is not beneficial to the world and to your neighbour, is evil. That which gives misery and pain to some, and pleasure to others, is.a mixture of good and evil.

Every action that you do produces a two-fold effect. It produces an impression in your mind and when you die you carry the Samskara in the Karmashaya or receptacle of works in your subconscious mind. It produces an impression on the world or Akasic records. Any action is bound to react upon you with equal force and effect. If you hurt another man, you really hurt yourself. This wrong action is bound to react upon and injure you. It will bring misery and pain. If you do some good to another man, you are really helping yourself. You are really doing good to yourself because there is nothing but the Self. This virtuous action will react upon you with equal force and effect. It will bring you joy and happiness. That is the reason why sages and Rishis, prophets and moralists harp on the one note: "Love thy neighbour as thyself. Never hurt the feelings of others. *Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*—non-injury is the highest virtue. Do good to all. Do as you would be done by." He who has rightly understood this law, can never do any harm to anybody. He will become an embodiment of goodness.

If you do a wrong action against an individual, it disturbs the whole atmosphere. If you entertain an

evil thought it pollutes the whole thought-world. That is the reason why occultists say: "Cultivate good thoughts. Eradicate evil thoughts." Every thought has a cause behind it. Every action, every thought, however trivial and insignificant it may be, affects the whole world directly or indirectly. That noble soul who always does good to the world and entertains sublime thoughts, is a blessing to the world at large. He purifies the whole world.

Suppose for a moment you write some sensational article in some newspaper. It arouses the emotions and sentiments of the readers. They begin to do something against the Government. A serious riot now ensues. Police forces are brought in. Many people are shot. Many new rules are framed to check and repress the riots. The parents of those who were killed suffer. This riot produces an effect on the minds of the people of other parts of the world also. In fact the whole world is affected by a single event. A single sensational article has wrought such disastrous results. One event may be both a cause and effect at the same time. The endless chain of cause and effect is kept up all throughout. You cannot say that this link is useless or unnecessary.

You have now a comprehensive understanding of this grand law of cause and effect. You can change your thoughts and habits and mould a new character. You can become a righteous man and a saint by doing virtuous actions and entertaining noble and divine

thoughts. When you attain knowledge of Self, when you annihilate this little mind, when you transcend the three Gunas and the three Avasthas, you can rest in your own Swaroop. You can become identical with the Law-giver and then the law of cause and effect will not operate on you. You can conquer Nature. May that invisible Law-giver, Brahman, guide you in the attainment of final beatitude of life!

3. LAW OF ACTION AND REACTION

The grand law of causation includes the law of action and reaction, the law of compensation and the law of retribution. All these laws come under one general, all-embracing heading *Doctrine of Karma.* If there is an action, there must be a reaction. The reaction will be of equal force and of a similar nature. The recent Great War has brought out a strong reaction. There is depression in trade. There is no peace in the country. People are not happy. The money market is tight. Many lives have been lost. The death of a just king brings immediate, strong reaction. Every thought, desire, imagination and sentiment causes reaction. Virtue brings its own reward; vice brings its own punishment. This is the working of the law of reaction. If I radiate joy to others, if I relieve the sufferings of others, I will doubtless get joy. This is the law of reaction. If I hurt another man, if I cause misery and pain to another, I will in turn get

misery and pain. God neither punishes the wicked nor rewards the virtuous. It is their own Karmas that bring reward and punishment. It is the law of action and reaction that brings the fruits. No one is to be blamed. The law operates everywhere with unceasing precision and scientific accuracy. The law of action and reaction operates both in the physical and mental planes.

A tennis ball strikes the ground and rises up with equal force. This is the law of action and reaction. If I strike against a pillow, the pillow is bound to react upon me with equal force. This is the law of action and reaction. If I speak sweet loving words to anyone, the man returns the feeling of love and speaks sweet words to me also. This is the law of action and reaction.

Why does a man behave in a rude manner? Why is another man courteous, civil and polite? Why does one man possess good moral character? Why does another possess evil character? Why does one man possess good health, strength and vitality? Why is another man sickly and miserable? Why is one joyful and cheerful while another is depressed and cheerless? These things can be easily explained by the law of action and reaction. Nobody is to be blamed. It is our own Karma that brings joy, misery, pleasure, pain, gain, loss, success and defeat. Every one of us is governed by the law of action and reaction. The character of an individual is subject to the law of

action and reaction. Each character or personality is the total result or collective totality of previous mental action. Thoughts change, habits change, character also changes. Our present character is the outcome of our past, and our future will be shaped by our present acts. Man creates his own character and destiny. He can do and undo his thoughts, habits, character and destiny. The law of action and reaction operates everywhere.

He who thoroughly understands this grand law of *action and reaction will never do any wrong action*, because he knows that it will react upon him and bring misery and pain. He will always be doing *virtuous actions as they will bring peace, joy, strength* and unalloyed felicity. Dear friends! Understand this law. Never violate it. Act according to the law and rest in peace. May that silent Law-giver who is hiding Himself behind these names and forms guide you in all your thoughts, speech, and actions! Glory to the law and the Law-giver!

4. LAW OF COMPENSATION

The law of compensation operates everywhere in Nature's phenomena. The seed breaks and a big tree appears from the seed. The tree comes out in accordance with the law of compensation. Fuel burns *and is destroyed. But there is heat in* accordance with the law of compensation. Many articles are cooked in

the fire on account of the heat. If there is extreme heat in Bezwada, there is extreme cold in Mt. Kailas or Uttarkasi in the Himalayas. This is the law of compensation. If there are ten scoundrels in a place, there are two Sattwic souls to bring compensation. If there is flood-tide at Puri, there is an ebb-tide at Waltair. This is the law of compensation. If there is day in India there is night in America. Peace follows a war and vice versa. Water becomes steam and the steam makes the engine move. The sulphuric acid in a jar of a battery is consumed but there is electricity produced in the bulb. You get light. This is the law of compensation. The law of compensation operates in the mental plane also.

Every effect has a cause. Every consequence has an antecedent. There must be perfect balance between the cause and effect, between the antecedent and consequence. The law of compensation keeps up the balance, and establishes peace, concord, equilibrium, harmony and justice in Nature. Think deeply. Reflect and cogitate. You will notice that this law of compensation is operating beautifully everywhere in the phenomena of Nature. It is inexorable and relentless. No one can defy this immutable and irresistible law. If you do an evil act, you will reap a bad fruit in compensation.

Sometimes a man complains: "God is unjust. I have always been a truthful man. I never do any wrong to anybody. I am always serving humanity.

Yet I have this terrible disease, asthma." This is incorrect and unreasonable. You will have to connect the effect with the cause always. Whatever you suffer from may appear to be unjust. You may think that you do not deserve it at all. But if you try to find out the cause of this suffering, you will doubtless find that it is perfectly right and a just compensation. Then you will have satisfaction. Just try in a few cases. Then you will have no room for complaint or lamentation. You will understand the beautiful working of the law of compensation. The affairs of our lives are so very intricate and complicated that we find it difficult to trace the cause of the present suffering. Though we are not able to trace the cause, though we are not able to understand the working of the law, yet the cause is there. Our intellect is so *feeble that it is not able to grasp the antecedent or* cause of a suffering or event.

A man may reap the fruit of compensation for his action either in this life or in the next. If we deny pre-existence and rebirth and take into consideration that life begins with this birth only and ends completely with the death of the body and there is nothing more, then it will be no compensation for the virtuous man who has done noble actions and for the wicked man who has done crimes. The chain of cause and effect, antecedent and consequence, will be broken abruptly. There will be terrible injustice everywhere. This cannot be. If you connect your

present life with the past and the future lives, and then judge the present life from the standpoint of eternal life, then there will be perfect justice. Then there will be perfect compensation.

Your present life has direct connection with the past and the future. There is perfect continuity of life all throughout, though you take several bodies. There is one common thread that runs through the whole soul-life of countless births. The life of the individual soul (Jivatma) consists of countless earthly lives. There is intimate connection between the past, present and future and the law of compensation operates with perfect justice and harmony. The physical body may change but the events and the law of compensation continue all throughout. Just as the daily life of a man has connection with the life of yesterday and the life of tomorrow, so also one period of earthly life has intimate bearing with the previous and future lives. Then only will there be perfect justice and compensation.

If you take an individual life as an isolated event that begins with the birth of the physical body and terminates with its death, you cannot find any correct explanation or solution for the affairs of life. You will be groping in darkness and despair. If the virtuous man who has not done any evil act in this birth suffers, this is due to some wrong act that he may have committed in his previous birth. He will have his compensation in his next birth. If the wicked man

who daily does many evil actions apparently enjoys in this birth, this is due to some good Karma he must have done in his previous birth. He will have compensation *in his next birth. He will reap the fruits* of his evil actions in his next birth. He will suffer in the next birth. The law of compensation is inexorable and relentless.

Your present life is nothing when compared with the whole soul-life. It is momentary. It is a mere fragment. Whenever you want to find out the cause or antecedent for anything, you will have to go deep into the affairs of the eternal soul-life. Then alone will there be perfect balance between the cause and the effect, between the antecedent and consequence. You will have to judge from a broad view of the eternal soul-life. The law of compensation embraces a wide range of the whole soul-life. Life does not end with the distintergration of this physical body alone. There is reincarnation. There have been countless previous lives also. You will have to take into consideration the widest view of the life of the soul. Then the line is quite clear. Then you will find a perfect, satisfactory solution for all the intricate and complicated affairs of life. Then there will be no room for grumbling or lamentation or misapprehension.

5. LAW OF RETRIBUTION

Every wrong action or crime brings its own punishment, *in accordance with the law* of retribution. The

law of causation, the law of action and reaction, the law of compensation and the law of retribution—all these operate together. He who robs another man robs himself. He who hurts another man hurts himself first. He who cheats another cheats himself first. Every wrong action causes punishment first in the inner nature or soul and externally in circumstances in the form of pain, misery, loss, failure, misfortune, disease, etc.

Man is ignorant. He is swayed by impulses, wrath, passion, attachment, pride and repulsion. He does various sorts of wicked actions. His intellect becomes perverted. He loses his memory. His understanding gets clouded by selfishness and greed. He does not know what he is exactly doing. Later on he repents. Discipline of the Indriyas is necessary. He should remember the law of causation, the law of action and reaction, and the law of retribution at every step, at every moment of his daily life. He should control his emotions and impulses through the practice of Pranayama and meditation. Then only will he not do any wrong action.

Remember that God is neither partial nor unjust. You suffer on account of your own wicked actions. Sow the seeds which will bring pleasant fruits and which will make you happy herein and hereafter. Do not sow the seeds which will bring unpleasant fruits and which will make you miserable and unhappy in this life or hereafter. Be cautious in doing your daily

ordained to sin? Why should he suffer owing to the whim of such a Creator? Questions like these remain a puzzle if you accept the theory of 'pre-ordination and Grace'. The doctrine of Karma alone will give satisfaction. It is sound. It appeals to reason. It throws a flood of clear light. Everyone reaps the fruits of his own actions. Man can do and undo his destiny by his own thoughts and character. He is a free agent. He may be a bad man in this birth, but he can change his thoughts, habits, tendencies and character and can become a good man or a saint in the next birth. He has free will. He can choose between two alternatives at every step. The theory of 'pre-ordination and Grace' cannot be accepted. It falls to the ground as it is unsound and untenable.

The doctrine of Karma only can explain the mysterious problem of good and evil in this world. The doctrine of Karma only can bring solace, contentment and strength to the afflicted and the desperate. It

Chitta will contain good impressions and you will possess a good character. If you do evil deeds there will be evil impressions in the subconscious mind, and you will have a bad character. Good Samskaras force a man to do good actions and vice versa. If you have a great asset of good Samskaras, you will not do any evil action at all. You will have an established good character. Mara or Satan can have no influence upon you.

Actions produce Samskaras or impressions or potencies. The impressions coalesce together through repetition and form habits. Tendencies develop into habits and character. The sum-total of the tendencies of a man is his character. Karmas manufacture character and character manufactures will. If the character is pure and strong, the will also will be pure and strong, and vice versa.

It is said that habit is second nature. I always say that habit is all nature. Control of habits is control of nature. Old, evil habits can be changed into healthy and desirable habits through the force of the pure irresistible will. A weak, impotent man is a slave of habits. He always imagines that habits are innate and that they cannot be changed in one's life-time. This is a mistake. If you want to change the old, morbid evil habits and establish new, healthy and good habits, you will have to struggle hard. The old habits will try to return, resist, persist and recur. Internal fight will go on between the old and new Samskaras,

between old and new habits. You will have to be very vigilant, careful and circumspect. You will have to be on the alert like a soldier who is on patrol duty at a magazine in a military cantonment. The old habit asserts itself and says: "O friend! You gave me a seat in your body and mind for twenty long years. You enjoyed several things through me. Why do you try to drive me off now? You are very cruel. I have every right and privilege from Nature, my kind mother, to remain here. Maya works through me only. The entire world runs through habits only. Man clings to tea, coffee, alcohol, tobacco, smoking, cinema, novels, gambling and playing cards through the force of habits. The whole world will dwindle into airy nothing but for me. The Lila of the Lord will stop had it not been for my presence in your system. I will not leave my seat in your body." This is the law of resistance. If the man who is attempting to eradicate an evil habit is careless, the old habit will recur again. In the beginning it may recur less frequently and last for a long time. Or it may recur less frequently and last for a short time But you will gain strength and gradually it will perish altogether and the new good habits will gain supremacy eventually.

If a new healthy habit is introduced even once and if you make even a single attempt in planting a new good habit, the good habit will grow gradually. It will also assert itself to gain a seat in the body and mind. It will work itself till it gets perfect success

and defeats the old, morbid habit. This is also another law of Nature. There is always a double life in Nature, the Asuric and Daivic. The fight between the Asuras and the Devas is always going on in the body and the mind. If you struggle very hard, the new good habits will establish themselves quickly. You will have rapid progress in the spiritual path. The pure, strong, irresistable will is bound to succeed ultimately. It can do anything. Its powers are ineffable and wonderful.

Chapter Three

SWADHARMA

1. WHAT IS SWADHARMA?

There is no proper equivalent in English for the the Sanskrit term 'Dharma'. It is generally rendered as 'duty', 'righteousness'. Any action that is best calculated to bring Sreyas (liberation) and Abhyudaya (exaltation), is Dharma. That which brings well-being to human beings is Dharma. The word Dharma comes from the root 'Dhri' which means 'to support' or 'to hold on'. That which upholds is Dharma. By Dharma people are upheld. As it supports and holds together it is called Dharma. That which secures preservation of being is Dharma. 'Swadharma' means one's own duty in accordance with the Varnashrama or caste and order of life which are founded according to the Gunas or qualities born of the nature of man.

God, religion and Dharma are inseparable. Man evolves through the practice of Dharma according to his caste and order of life, and eventually attains Self-realization, the ultimate goal of life, which brings infinite bliss, supreme peace, unbroken joy, highest knowledge, eternal satisfaction and immortality.

The mark of Dharma is Achara (good conduct).

Achara is the mark of the good. Higher than all the teachings, is Achara. From Achara, Dharma is born; and Dharma enhances life. By Achara man attains fame, power and strength here and hereafter. Achara is the highest Dharma. Achara is the root of all Tapas.

Dharma tops the list of the four Purusharthas, viz., Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Dharma gives wealth, satisfaction of desires and liberation in the end.

"The Brahmana was Brahma's mouth; the Rajanya was made His two arms; His two thighs the Vaishya; the Sudra was born of His two feet." The four castes are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. Self-restraint, serenity, patience, austerity, purity, belief in God, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, uprighteousness, truthfulness, wisdom, teaching and studying the Vedas, doing sacrifices, and also guiding others in offering sacrifices and gifts and receiving gifts are the duties of a Brahmana born of his own nature.

Courage, generosity, vigour, prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity, not fleeing from battle, the nature of a ruler, protection of the people, gifts, doing sacrifices and study of the Vedas are the duties of a Kshatriya born of his own nature.

Ploughing, protection of cattle, trade, charity, doing sacrifice, study of the Vedas, engaging in commerce, finance and agriculture are the duties of a Vaishya born of his own nature.

To serve ungrudgingly all these castes is the duty

of a Sudra born of his own nature.

Much of the evil has grown through men of one caste grasping at the work of the other castes, and thinking more of the rights his caste gives him than of the duties it imposes.

The Brahmana and Kshatriya have claimed their privileges ardently and have shrunk from the heavy burden belonging to their castes. Naturally their attitude has provoked opposition, and antagonism has replaced mutual goodwill and service. Consequently caste has become a social bitterness, instead of being a framework maintaining all in happy order. If people of different castes practise their Dharmas, caste confusion will pass away and abundant peace and joy will prevail.

The Ashramas or stages in life are four, viz., *Brahmacharya*, the stage of studentship, *Grahasthya*, the stage of householdership, *Vanaprastha*, the stage of forest-dwelling or seclusion, and *Sannyasa*, the order of total renunciation. Each order of life has its own duties. In none of these stages must a man grasp at the special duties of the other three. At the present moment it is difficult to maintain or observe the exact details of the ancient rules, as the conditions have changed very much. But, if we can have a clear idea of the fundamental duties of each, we shall still be able to shape the life to a regulated course of development and steady growth.

The life of the student starts with the Upanaya-

ceremony, his second birth. You will find in the Manu Smriti: "Let the student ever engage in the study of the Vedas and in doing service to his preceptor. Let the student refrain from wine, meat, perfumes, tasty dishes, garlands, company of women, and from injury to sentient creatures. Let him give up lust, anger, greed, dancing, singing and playing on musical instruments, dice play, gossip, slander and untruth."

"Let the student always sleep alone and let him not waste his seed; he who from lust destroyeth his seed, destroyeth his vow. He should develop the spirit of service, humility and obedience. He should mould his character properly. He should be chaste in thought, word and deed."

Then comes the stage of the householder. The student, after finishing his duties enters the order of Grahasthya, when he is ready to take up the duties and responsibilities of the householder's life. Of all Ashramas, that of the householder is the highest, as it verily supports the other three. As all the streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, so all the Ashramas flow to rest in the householder. This is the field for developing various virtues such as mercy, love, generosity, patience, tolerance, purity, prudence and right judgment. It is highly lamentable to note that the grandeur, solemnity and dignity of this stage of life is lost now owing to the confusion of its duties with those of the student, caused by the modern evil of child-marriage. There is no ideal in the life of the

householder. That is the reason why the number of Sannyasins is now increasing. The central teaching of the Gita and Yoga Vasishtha is that Self-realization should be attained in and through the world.

Let me remind you of one important teaching of the Gita which will give you peace of mind and bliss: 'Better one's own duty, though destitute of merit, than the duty of another well discharged. Better death in the discharge of one's duty; the duty of another is full of danger.'

There is another important point. You will clearly understand that the right performance of the duties of any station in life without attachment will bring Self-realization and liberation. Just hear the following anecdote of a pious woman and a butcher with rapt attention:

A Sannyasin retired into a forest to practise Yoga. He remained in a cave for a period of twelve years. He practised Pranayama, Khechari Mudra and various Yogic Kriyas. He developed some powers through these practices. One day he was sitting under the shade of a tree. A crane was perched upon one of the branches of the tree. It passed excreta on the head of the Sannyasin The Sannyasin became enraged. He glared at the crane. Some Yogic fire at once emanated from the crown of his head and burnt the crane to ashes immediately. The Sannyasin rejoiced at the marvellous power he possessed.

He now went into the city for procuring his usual

alms. He called out 'Narayana Hari' at the door of a householder. The lady of the house was engaged in nursing her sick husband. She was a very chaste woman who was very much devoted to her husband. She observed Pativrita Dharma. She answered from within the room: "O Bhikshu, kindly wait a bit." The Sannyasin was very much annoyed. He refletced: 'Look at the arrogant nature of this lady. She has asked me to wait. She is not aware of my Yogic powers.' While he was thinking thus the lady said: "O Bhikshu! There is no crane here. Don't think too much of yourself. Do not be puffed up with your Siddhis." The Sannyasin stood in utter amazement. He had to wait quietly. At last the lady came outside with alms for the Sannyasin. The Sannyasin prostrated at her feet and asked: "O Devi, how did you manage to read my thoughts?" The lady replied: "O Swamiji! I do not know anything of Pranayama or any kind of Yogic Kriya. I made you wait because I was busy attending upon my sick husband. I am an ignorant woman. I am sincerely devoted to my husband. I regard him as my Guru and God. I worship him. I don't go to temples. I do not repeat Mantras. I serve my husband day and night. I obey his words implicitly. I shampoo his feet. I walk in the footsteps of Savitri, Nalayani and Anasuya. I sleep after he has slept. I get up in the morning before he arises. He is my all-in-all. Through such service, devotion and duty to my husband I have received illumination. I have

a pure heart. I could read your thoughts.. This is the secret of my Abhyasa. If you want to learn more, go to a butcher who sells meat in the big market. He will teach you something of absorbing interest and importance. You will be highly delighted indeed. You will be immensely benefited."

The Sannyasin went straight to the town where the butcher was living. He came direct to the market and found the butcher chopping meat. The Sannyasin thought within himself: 'O my Lord! Is this the man from whom I am going to learn something interesting and useful? He is the devil incarnate. He is a ruffian.' The butcher read the thoughts of the Sannyasin and said: "O Swamiji! Did that lady send you? Kindly take your seat here. I shall attend on you presently." The butcher finished his business with customers and then asked the Sannyasin to follow him to his house. He asked the Swami to wait outside and went in. He attended to his old father and mother. He gave them a bath and drank their Charanamrita. He fed them nicely and put them to bed. He then came to the Sannyasin and said: "O Swamiji, I am at thy feet now. Kindly order me any service." The Sannyasin asked him some questions on Vedanta. The butcher gave him beautiful, soul-stirring replies concerning the Atman, the nature of freedom, Sadhana, the state of a Jivanmukta, etc. The Sannyasin was astonished. Many of his doubts were cleared. He was highly pleased with the butcher. He asked him: "How is it

that you are doing this dirty work? How did you manage to get such exalted knowledge?" The butcher replied: "Swamiji, you are mistaken. No duty or work is impure or degrading. Every work is worship of God. I do my duty well without any attachment or motive. I serve my parents day and night. They are my God on earth. I worship them daily. I do not know any Yogic practice. I am not a learned man. I discharge my duties satisfactorily. This is my religion. This is my Yoga. I obtained illumination, perfection, purity and freedom through the discharge of my duties as a householder and through the service of my parents. This is the secret of my Yoga and Self-realization."

An ignorant worldly-minded man says: "I have to do my duties. I have to educate my four sons and three daughters. I have to please my employer. I have heavy duties in the office. I have to remit money to my widowed sister. I have a large family. I have six brothers and five sisters. Where is the time for doing Sandhya and Japa and the study of religious books? There is no time even to breathe. I have no leisure. Even during holidays I have to work. I bring office papers to my home and work at night till eleven. I do not want Sannyasa or any Yoga. The office work and the maintenance of my family is itself Yoga."

Do you call this duty? It is mere slavery. It is bondage. The man is afraid of his superior at every moment. Even in his dreams he meets his office-

mates and the employer, and posts figures in the ledger. This is not sense of duty. The man cannot pray even for a second. He has no time to read a single Sloka of the Gita. There is not a single thought of God even in a month. He takes tea, eats food, sits at the table to write, sleeps and procreates. The entire life passes away like this. This is selfish work. This is not duty This is work for gain and satisfaction of the lower appetite. Anything done under compulsion and expectation is not duty. You must not interpret slavery as duty. You must not take selfish works that are done through attachment, greed and passion as duty You will be doing great injustice. This is self-created drudgery.

A clerk or an officer earns money by taking bribes and when his conscience pricks him, he feeds some Brahmins and says· "I have done a great duty today. I have fed fifteen Brahmins with Dakshina of four annas each." This is his idea of duty. He further adds: "Why should I take Sannyasa and practise Yoga? I will earn lots of money and do charity. This is the best kind of life." Poor deluded soul! May God give him good understanding!

Ahimsa Paramo Dharma cannot be strictly practised by householders. It can be practised by Sannyasins who tread the path of Nivritti Marga. They will have to practise it. If a vagabond enters the house and tries to molest a lady, a householder cannot keep quiet. He will not say· "I will not resist evil now."

He will immediately take a club and give the man a good thrashing. Suppose a lady is in danger. Someone wants to murder her to take away her jewels. She seeks the shelter of a young, *strong man* for protection. It is the duty of this young man to resist evil and defend her by attacking this cruel man. He cannot say now: 'Non-injury is the highest virtue'. It is his duty to save the life of the lady by resisting evil. Otherwise he fails in his duty.

Morality and duty vary according to circumstances. To resist evil becomes the duty of a man in certain circumstances. The king should always raise his rod of chastisement to keep peace and order in his country. He cannot say: "I will not resist evil. Ahimsa Paramo Dharma." He will fail in the discharge of his duty if he does not punish the wicked, and his country will be in a state of utter chaos. To hang a murderer or a dacoit is Ahimsa for a king. Himsa and Ahimsa are relative terms. To kill a man who is taking away the lives of many is Ahimsa. Have you understood the secret of Ahimsa now? A real Sannyasin should not defend himself even when his life is in danger. A Sannyasin is one who has no body and who identifies himself with the Atman. To shoot a dog or a horse that is suffering from acute agony that cannot be alleviated, is Ahimsa for a European. He wants to free the dog from pain. His motive is good.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "Better one's own

duty, though destitute of merits, than the well-executed duty of another. He who doeth the duty laid down by his own nature incurreth not sin. Congenital duty, O son of Kunti, though defective, ought not to be abandoned. All undertakings, indeed, are clouded by defects as fire by smoke." Ch. XVIII-47, 48.

Then again Lord Krishna says:

Sarvadharman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja,
Aham twa sarvapapebhyo mokshayishyami
ma sucha.

"Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter: sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins." Ch. XVIII-66.

In the previous two Slokas He asks Arjuna to abandon all duties. Is this contradiction? Is the Lord blowing hot and cold with the same breath? No. This is not contradiction. Arjuna says to the Lord: "My heart is weighed down with the voice of faintness; my mind is confused as to duty. I ask Thee which may be better—that tell me decisively. I am Thy disciple, suppliant to Thee; teach me." Ch. II-7. Lord Krishna gives the reply in Sloka 66 of Ch. XVIII.

What is the right significance of the words 'Sarva Dharmam—all duties'? Some people say: "Give up the Dharmas of the Indriyas." How could this be? Even a Jivanmukta sees, eats, walks, answers the

calls of nature. According to Sri Sankara it means: 'Both righteous and unrighteous deeds, renouncing all works.' According to Ramanuja it means: 'Desire for fruit in action and attachment thereto and actor-mentality in action. Actions should be performed without attachment to action or its fruits. They should be dedicated to the Supreme by removing the idea of agency therein.' According to Madhva it means: 'Fruit of action—renunciation of fruit in action.' According to Tilak it means: 'Various duties like those of non-violence, truth, service of parents and preceptors, sacrifice, charity, renunciation, etc.' The passage means that Arjuna is to avoid the tangle of these duties and take refuge in the Supreme. In other words, whatever actions one has to perform, according to one's disposition and innate tendency, he may do, taking refuge in the Supreme. Krishna gives a command to Arjuna, an assurance and a consolation.

Sloka 66 is the most important verse in the Gita. If one can live in the spirit of this Sloka alone he can have Sreyas or highest bliss. Vedantins explain this Sloka as follows: 'Give up Jiva-bhavana and take up Brahma-bhavana by meditating on *Aham Brahma Asmi* Mahavakya. You will have liberation or Mukti. All sins will be destroyed.'

I wish to point out to you that morality and duty are relative terms. They are changing according to the state of life, stage of mental-growth and evolution

of the individual, time and circumstances, and the country in which one lives. To eat meat in Cashmere is perfectly moral for a Bengali Brahmin. In the eyes of a Madrasi Brahmin this is highly immoral. To have four wives (polygamy) is perfectly moral for a Muslim or a Chinaman, but for a Hindu this is highly immoral. A gentleman or a lady can have divorce of his wife or her husband very easily in the West. Marriage is a contract in the West, whereas in India it is a sacrament or holy act that is done before the sacred fire. Divorce is quite moral in the West, but it is highly immoral in the East. For an Arya Samajist widow-marriage is quite moral; for a Sanatanist it is highly immoral. Poliandry (one woman marrying several husbands, the opposite of polygamy) is quite moral in Tibet, but it is highly immoral in the eyes of people of other countries. It is perfectly moral for a Sikh to drink, but it is immoral for him to smoke. People of cold countries require meat and a little liquor to keep up heat and help digestion. A soldier needs meat to keep up his strength and martial spirit. A Brahmin or a Sannyasin wants vegetable food, milk and fruits to help his meditation and keep up his Sattwic mental attitude. Rishi Viswamitra had to eat prohibited meat when his life was in jeopardy. Morality changes when one's life is at stake (Apat-Dharma). Ignorant people hate others when they see them doing something that they themselves are not doing. A Madrasi vegetarian Brahmin hates a fish-

eating Bengali Brahmin. This is a sad mistake. This retards his spiritual progress. A Madrasi is horrified when he sees a Hindustani eating with both his hands from the same plate with his children.

Similarly the idea of duty also varies among people of different countries. An African Negro cannot do Agnihotra in his hot country in summer. A Cashmere Pundit cannot take morning bath in winter in his place. The duty of one class of people cannot be the duty of another class of people. The duty of a man of one stage of life cannot be the duty of a man of another stage. The duties of a Brahmin, Vaishya, Kshatriya and Sudra, the duties of a Brahmachari, householder, forest-dweller and a Sannyasin, are quite different. A Brahmin cannot do the duty of a soldier. To kill an enemy in the battlefield is the duty of a soldier or Kshatriya. To practise Ahimsa in thought, word and deed is the duty of a Sannyasin and a Brahmin. Man evolves quickly by performing rigidly his duties allotted to his station in life.

Nectar's sons! Children of immortality! Shake off all weaknesses. Stand up and gird your loins. Do your Swadharma satisfactorily in accordance with your caste or stage in life. Evolve quickly in spirituality. Eternal bliss, supreme peace, infinite knowledge and satisfaction can be had in the Atman only. Practice *of Swadharma will surely lead to the attainment of* God-consciousness. There is no happiness in finite objects. The Infinite alone is bliss. Understand the

Truth through the practice of your Swadharma. This world is unreal. It is like a mirage. The senses and mind deceive you at every moment. Wake up! Open your eyes and learn to discriminate. Do not trust your Indriyas. They are your enemies. It is very difficult to get this human birth. Life is short, time is fleeting. Those who cling to unreal things of this world are verily committing suicide. Struggle hard to practise your Swadharma. Keep the ideal before your eyes always. Have a programme of life. Attempt to realize the ideal. Stick to Swadharma with leech-like tenacity and attain success. Practise it and realize the state of Satchidananda right now in this very second. May the blessings of the Lord be upon you all! May joy, bliss, immortality, peace and poise abide with you for ever!

2. DUTIES OF MAN

Man has certain important duties and responsibilities in life. He has to evolve morally and spiritually by performing these duties in the right manner. He has to act and live according to the law of God. He has to find out the rules of conduct and the measure of his responsibilities. He must have a thorough knowledge of the moral code of Manu or Yajnavalkya and must act according to the rules laid down therein. Then only can he be rightly called a man.

Man has duties towards parents, children and other family members. He has duties towards society and

the country. He has duties of the Varnashrama. He has duties to his own self, and, last but not the least, he has important duties towards God. He must fulfil all these duties of his life. Then only he can find progress in his life. Then only will he enjoy real peace of mind.

He must serve his parents who have given him this physical body with great Shraddha and Bhava. In the Taitireeya Upanishad you will find: *Matrudevo bhava, pitrudevo bhava.* The parents should be worshipped as visible representatives of God on earth. Sri Ashutosh Mukerji of Calcutta, late Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University used to worship his mother and drink her Charanamrita daily before going to his office. Modern educated people do not pay any proper regard to their parents. If the father is uneducated and if the son is an England-trained man, he will say that his father is a servant of the house when anybody puts the question: "Who is this old man?"

He must train his children in the proper manner. He must give them good education in Sanskrit, English and in technical subjects. He must train them in the path of spirituality from the very childhood. He must be devoted to his wife who is his partner in life, and who occupies the left half of his body (Ardhangini). No religious rite is valid without her presence. He must regard her as a real helper in the path of spirituality. As soon as a son is born she

becomes his mother. The Srutis declare: *'Atma vai jaayate putrah*—the soul is born as a son.' He must give up all ideas of relationship as wife as soon as a son is born. He must give up sexual intercourse. Both should lead a spiritual life. The husband should not regard his wife as a machine for procreation only. There is some higher spiritual purpose. She has to help the husband in his spiritual evolution. She has to attend to his wants. She has to serve him nicely in all possible ways.

Man must serve society according to his temperament, taste and capacity. This will help in the purification of his mind. He must serve with Nishkamya Bhav as an honarary member. He should not get any remuneration. He must develop the spirit of patriotism. He must serve the country. Service of the country is service of Mother Kali. It is pure Mother-worship.

He must perform the duties of his Varnashrama. A Brahmin should observe serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, wisdom, knowledge and belief in God. A Kshatriya should manifest prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity, bravery, generosity, and the nature of a ruler. The Vaishya should engage in agriculture, trade and protection of cattle. Sudras should serve the other three castes.

A Brahmachari should study religious books till he reaches the age of twenty-five. If he has taken the

vow of life-long celibacy, if he wants to become a Naishthika Brahmachari, he need not enter the stage of a householder. He should have real lasting dispassion and discrimination. Then only will he be really benefited. He can devote his whole life to spiritual pursuits.

If a Brahmachari does not want to take up the course of life-long celibacy, he can become a householder. He can marry after finishing his education. He can visit his wife occasionally for bringing progeny to keep up the line and not for sensual gratification. He will be styled as a Brahmachari, if he strictly adheres to the above rule. After he has finished the stage of a householder and after fixing up his son in a proper position, he can become a Vanaprastha either alone or with his wife. He should not remain in the house till the end of life. He will be having various anxieties and Moha for children if he remains in the house. If he finds it difficult to leave he can remain in a cottage outside the house. If he finds this also difficult, he can remain upstairs or in a solitary room and can have interview with the visitors and members of the house in the evening between 4 and 5. If a Vanaprastha wants to take Sannyasa, he can do so. Vanaprastha is only a preparatory step to Sannyasa. The glory and freedom of a Sannyasin can hardly be described. A Sannyasin only can cut off all sorts of attachments. Otherwise some sort of subtle connection will always remain.

When once one takes Sannyasa, he becomes a dead man to the family members. Otherwise they always think of getting something from him. The subtle atachment in the mind still remains in both parties. This is quite sufficient to bring one back to the wheel of birth and death. The very colour of the orange robe gives strength and purity. I do not believe those people who say: 'We have given colouring to our hearts.' This is timidity and hypocricy. There are still Moha, Raga and Vasanas lurking in them. If there is internal change, the external change is bound to come. I do admit that eradication of egoism, Sankalpas and Ashrama-Bheda is absolutely necessary. Why then did Sri Sankara and Sri Ramakrishna take Sannyasa? What is the necessity for this order at all? Sannyasa has got its own advantages.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita: 'The four castes were emanated by Me, by the different distribution of qualities and actions; know Me to be the author of them, though the actionless and inexhaustible.' Ch. IV-13. Throughout the world this classification of caste exists. The catholic priests and the reverend clergymen represent the Brahmins. They do meditation and preaching. The soldiers of the West are the Kshatriyas of Rajputana. The business people in the West are the Vaishyas. Those who do menial service are the Sudras. This classification is based according to the qaulity of man. Those who are Sattwic are Brahmins: those who are Ragasic are

Kshatriyas; those who are Tamasic are the Sudras. This classification is according to Gunas and Karma.

I shall speak a word on conscience. Some people say: 'We can find out good and evil, right and wrong, by consulting our conscience only'. No individual will be able to do this by consulting his conscience only. It may give some clue and help. Conscience is not an infallible guide. The conscience of a man changes according to his experiences and education. Conscience is one's own intellectual conviction. The conscience of the individual speaks in accordance with his tendencies, habits, passions, inclinations, capacity and education. The conscience of a savage speaks a language entirely different from that of a civilised European. The conscience of an African Negro speaks a language entirely different from that of an ethically develloped Yogi of India. Ask a clerk in the Collectorate: 'What are your duties?' He will say: 'I must earn money to support my family and parents. I must not injure others. I must read Ramayana.' He has no idea of the laws of Nature. He will submit himself blindly to the laws whatever they may be. If you ask him: 'What are your duties to the country and humanity? What is right and wrong? What is good and evil?' he will simply blink. Ask any car-driver: 'What is your duty?' He will say: 'Anyhow I must earn Rs. 20 daily. I have to purchase ten gallons of petrol, tyres, tubes and crude oil. The tyres are very costly. I have six daughters and five sons. I must protect

them.' If you ask him anything about God, virtues, Moksha, bondage and freedom, right and wrong, he will be bewildered Why is there so much divergence between the promptings of conscience of two persons of the same caste, religion or creed? Why do we find ten different convictions among ten persons of the same district and same community? The voice of conscience alone is not sufficient to guide man in understanding of the laws of God, right and wrong, good and evil and other duties of life. The Sastras and realised persons (Apta vakyam) only can truly guide a man in the discharge of his duties in an efficient manner That is the reason why Lord Krishna emphatically declares 'He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures followeth the promptings of desire, attaineth not to pefection, nor happiness, nor the highest goal Therefore let the scriptures be thy authority in determining what ought to done, or what ought not to be done Knowing what hast been declared by the ordinances of the scriptures, thou oughtest to work in this world' Ch. XVI-23, 24.

3. THE THREE GUNAS

A clear understanding of the three *Gunas* and their operations is very necessary for a *Karma Yogi*. He who has knowledge of the three Gunas can do his work in a better and more efficient manner.

Prakriti is composed of the three Gunas or forces, namely, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. Sattwa is harmony

Kshatriyas; those who are Tamasic are the Sudras. This classification is according to Gunas and Karma.

I shall speak a word on conscience. Some people say: 'We can find out good and evil, right and wrong, by consulting our conscience only'. No individual will be able to do this by consulting his conscience only. It may give some clue and help. Conscience is not an infallible guide. The conscience of a man changes according to his experiences and education. Conscience is one's own intellectual conviction. The conscience of the individual speaks in accordance with his tendencies, habits, passions, inclinations, capacity and education. The conscience of a savage speaks a language entirely different from that of a civilised European. The conscience of an African Negro speaks a language entirely different from that of an ethically develloped Yogi of India. Ask a clerk in the Collectorate: 'What are your duties?' He will say: 'I must earn money to support my family and parents. I must not injure others. I must read Ramayana.' He has no idea of the laws of Nature. He will submit himself blindly to the laws whatever they may be. If you ask him: 'What are your duties to the country and humanity? What is right and wrong? What is good and evil?' he will simply blink. Ask any car-driver: 'What is your duty?' He will say: 'Anyhow I must earn Rs. 20 daily. I have to purchase ten gallons of petrol, tyres, tubes and crude oil. The tyres are very costly. I have six daughters and five sons. I must protect

them.' If you ask him anything about God, virtues, Moksha, bondage and freedom, right and wrong, he will be bewildered. Why is there so much divergence between the promptings of conscience of two persons of the same caste, religion or creed? Why do we find ten different convictions among ten persons of the same district and same community? The voice of conscience alone is not sufficient to guide man in understanding of the laws of God, right and wrong, good and evil and other duties of life. The Sastras and realised persons (Apta vakyam) only can truly guide a man in the discharge of his duties in an efficient manner. That is the reason why Lord Krishna emphatically declares· 'He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the scriptures followeth the promptings of desire, attaineth not to pefection, nor happiness, nor the highest goal. Therefore let the scriptures be thy authority in determining what ought to done, or what ought not to be done. Knowing what hast been declared by the ordinances of the scriptures, thou oughtest to work in this world.' Ch. XVI-23, 24.

3. THE THREE GUNAS

A clear understanding of the three Gunas and their operations is very necessary for a Karma Yogi. He who has knowledge of the three Gunas can do his work in a better and more efficient manner

Prakriti is composed of the three Gunas or forces, namely, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. Sattwa is harmony

or light or wisdom or equilibrium or goodness. Rajas is passion or motion or activity. Tamas is inertia or inaction or darkness. During Cosmic Pralaya these three Gunas exist in a state of equilibrium. During Srishti or projection a vibration arises and the three qualities are manifested in the physical universe. The three qualities bring bondage to the Jiva or the individual soul. Though Sattwa is a desirable quality, yet it also binds a man. It is a golden fetter. Rajas is the source of attachment and thirst for life. It causes attachment to action. Tamas binds man to heedlessness (Pramada), laziness (Alasya) and sleep (Nidra).

These three qualities are inseparable. No one is absolutely Rajasic or Sattwic or Tamasic. Sometimes Sattwa prevails in man. He is calm and serene. He sits quietly and entertains sublime, soul-elevating thoughts. He studies religious scriptures. He talks on divine topics. When Sattwa prevails, the other two qualities are overpowered for the time being. At other times Rajas prevails. He does action. He moves about. He plans, schemes, speculates. He craves for power, wealth and action. When Rajas prevails, Sattwa and Tamas are overpowered for the time being. Sometimes Tamas prevails and the man becomes slothful. He feels lazy, indolent and lethargic. He is dull and feels sleepy. When Tamas prevails, Sattwa and Rajas are overpowered for the time being.

In some people Sattwa is predominent; in others

Rajas is predominent; and in some others Tamas is predominent. When the wisdom-light streams forth from all the gates of the body, then it may be known that Sattwa is increasing. Greed, outgoing energy, undertaking of action, restlessness and desire—these are born of the increase of Rajas. Darkness, delusion, *stagnation*, heedlessness—these are born of the increase of inertia. If Sattwa is predominent at the time of one's death, then he goes to the spotless world of sages. If Rajas is predominent at the time of one's death, he will doubtless be born among those that are attached to action. If one dies when Tamas is predominent, he will be born in the womb of the senseless.

The fruit of a Sattwic action is harmonious and spotless; the fruit of a Rajasic action is pain, and of a Tamasic action is ignorance. Those who are established in Sattwa rise upwards. The Rajasic people occupy a middle place and the Tamasic people go downwards, shrouded in the vilest of qualities.

Intense Rajas takes a Sattwic turn. A man who is immersed in deep Rajas will take to Nivritti Marga or the path of renunciation. He will, as is the law, be fed up with activities. In the Gita you will find:

Arurukshormuneryogam karma karanam uchyate,
Yogarudhasya tasyaiva shamah karanam uchyate.

"For a sage who is seeking Yoga, action is called the means; for the same sage when enthroned in

Yoga, serenity is called the means." Ch. VI-3.

It is impossible to rise or jump to Sattwa all of a sudden from Tamas. One should convert Tamas into full Rajas first. Then he can reach Sattwa. Sattwa is intense activity. Just as the wheel of an engine appears to remain stationary when it moves very swiftly, so also a Sattwic man appears to be calm through his self-restraint or control. A Sattwic man is most active. He can turn out tremendous work within the twinkling of an eye. He has full concentration.

Prakriti does all action. It is the Gunas that operate. Owing to ignorance the body is mistaken for the Self. Egoism of man asserts at every step, nay, at every second. Just as the motion of the clouds is falsely attributed to the sun, so also the movements of the body and the Indriyas are falsely attributed to the Self. The Self is always silent and is the witness of all actions. He is Nishkriya or Akarta. You will find in the Gita:

"All actions are wrought by the qualities born of nature only. The self, deluded by egoism, thinketh: 'I am the doer.' But he, O mighty-armed, who knoweth the essence of the divisions of the qualities and functions, holding that the qualities move amid the qualities, is not attached." Ch. III-27, 28.

" 'I do not do anything' should think the harmonised one, who knoweth the essence of things. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping,

breathing, speaking, giving, grasping, opening and closing the eyes, he holdeth: 'The senses move among the objects of the senses.'" Ch. V-8, 9.

"The Lord of the world produceth not the ideas of agency, nor actions, nor union together of actions and their fruit; nature, however, manifesteth." Ch. V-14.

"He who seeketh that Prakriti, verily performeth all actions, and that the Self is actionless, he seeth." Ch. XIII-29.

"When the seer perceiveth no agent other than the qualities and knoweth That which is higher than the qualities, he entereth into My nature." Ch. XIV-19.

The mind and the five organs of knowledge, viz., ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose, are formed out of the Sattwic portion of the Tanmatras or rudiments of matter. The Pranas and the five organs of action, viz., tongue, hands, feet, genitals and anus are formed out of the Rajasic portion of the Tanmatras. This physical body is formed out of the Tamasic portion of the Tanmatras.

By meditation on the significance of the above Slokas of the Gita, one can transcend the three Gunas. The Atman or Brahman is beyond the three Gunas (Trigunatita). One should increase his Sattwa Guna by development of virtuous qualities, by taking Sattwic food, doing charity, practising austerities, doing Japa and meditation, controlling the Indriyas,

and studying religious books. Then he should go beyond Sattwa Guna also by identifying himself with the Atman or Sakshi, and practising Brahma Abhyasa or Atma-Chintan or Nididhyasan.

When the dweller in the body has crossed these three qualities whence all bodies have been produced, liberated from birth, death, old age, diseases and sorrow, he drinketh the nectar of immortality. He who has crossed the three qualities has the following signs as described in the Gita: "He who hateth not radiance nor outgoing energy, nor even delusion, when present, nor longeth after them when absent; he who, seated as a neutral, is unshaken by the qualities; who saying: 'The qualities revolve', standeth apart, immovable; balanced in pleasure and pain, self-reliant, to whom a lump of earth, a rock and gold are alike; the same to loved and unloved, firm, the same in censure and praise, the same in honour and ignominy, the same to friend and foe, abandoning all undertakings—he is said to have crossed over the qualities. And he who serveth Me exclusively by the Yoga of Devotion, he, crossing beyond qualities, is fit to become the Eternal." Ch. XIV-22, 26.

4. KARMA INDRIYAS

A description of these organs will not be out of place here. A Karma Yogi should have a detailed knowledge of the nature and workings of these Indriyas. Vak (organ of speech), Pani (hands),

Pada (feet), Upashtam (organ of generation) and Payu or Guda (anus, the organ of excretion) are the five organs of action. The real Indriyas are in the astral body (Linga-Sarira). They are very subtle (Sukshma). They have corresponding centres or counterparts in the brain (nerve centres). What you see outside—mouth, hands, feet, organ of reproduction and anus are mere Bahya-Karanas or external instruments. The Karma Indriyas are located in the *Pranamaya Kosha or vital sheath of the astral body.* The Karma Indriyas are the five soldiers. The commander-in-chief *is the mind. The mind extracts work from these soldiers when it desires to get sensual objects for its gratification. Mind also works in unison with these five organs. Mind is the leader of the big dacoit. These five organs are his assistants. These Karma Indriyas execute the commands of their*

reflection of Chaitanya in the mind-mirror is a constant companion of the mind. It is he who reaps the fruits of actions, pleasure or pain.

You will find in the Gita: "These five causes, O mighty-armed, learn of Me as declared in the Sankhya system, for the accomplishment of all actions. The body, the actor, the various organs, the diverse kinds of energies and the presiding deities, also, the fifth—whatever action a man performeth by his body, mind and speech, whether right or the reverse, these five are the cause thereof." Ch. XVIII-13, 14, 15.

"That being so, he verily, who owing to untrained reason looketh on his Self, which is isolated, as the actor, he of perverted intelligence seeth not." Ch. XVIII-16.

"He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose reason is not affected though he slay these people, he slayeth not, nor is he bound," says the Lord. Krishna is known as a Nitya Brahmachari though He lived with Sri Radha, Rukmini and Satyabhama and had children. He was fully resting in His own Swaroop—Nirguna Brahman. Lord Krishna separated Himself from the body, mind and Indriyas and identified Himself with Satchidananda Swaroop. So He was called a Nitya Brahmachari. Durvasa ate a large quantity of food at a feast and proclaimed to his disciples: "I have eaten nothing. I am Nitya Upavasi. Tell this to the River Jumna, she will give way to you all. You can cross the river without a boat." Tiruvalluvar, a

sage of South India gave the same instructions to his wife to cross a river as Durvasa did. She was quite astonished to see that the river gave way when she uttered the words of her husband. The state of Jnanis is indescribable and incomprehensible.

The presiding deity of the Vak Indriya is Agni; that of the hand is Indra, that of the feet is Upendra or Vishnu; that of Upastham is Prajapata; and that of Payu or anus is Mrityu.

You will find again in the Gita: "Knowledge, the knowable and the knower form the threefold impulse to action; the organ, the action and the actor form the threefold constituents of action " Ch. XVIII-18.

You will find in Nyaya philosophy the terms Jnana, Iccha and Prayatna Jnana is knowledge of objects. Iccha is desire Prayatna is effort to obtain the desired objects At first the Jiva or the individual soul has knowledge of the objects Then a desire arises in the mind to get possession of the objects for his enjoyment Then he applies himself diligently and exerts to obtain these objects Desire is the motive force that moves the mind to action. Man muses or thinks of the objects of the senses. Then he develops attachment to them From attachment there springs desire. Thought is the fuel. Desire is the fire. If you can stop the Sankalpas, the fire of desire will be extinguished by itself, just as a lamp is extinguished when the supply of ghee or oil is withdrawn.

There is at first attraction for objects. Then comes

attachment. Even if the attraction dies, the longing (Kamana or Spriha) or hankering for the object will continue to remain. This is Trishna-tantu or the thread of hankering. Then there is the preference for objects. This is still more difficult to be eradicated. Destroy attachment first. Then the longing and preference will slowly die.

There are three kinds of impulses, viz., the impulse of thinking, the impulse of speech and the impulse of action. A Karma Yogi should not be impulsive. He must not be carried away by emotions. He must calm the surging, bubbling emotions and the impulses. He must purify the emotions. Then he can turn out real solid work. He must destroy all unnecessary, useless or vain thoughts. This will add to his reserve energy. This will conserve his energy. Energy is wasted in useless thinking.

Energy is also wasted in idle talking and worldly gossiping. A Karma Yogi should observe Mowna or silence for two hours daily and for six hours on Sundays and holidays. Mowna will destroy impulses of speech. He who observes Mowna can use measured words during speaking. He can control anger and falsehood. He will be peaceful. He will have a strong will. There are people who talk like a machine at a tremendous speed, without a full-stop. The greatest punishment for such people is to put them in silence for three days. They will be in a great fix. He who talks much, thinks little and does little. He is a very

restless man. The organ of speech brings great distraction of mind. Control of speech really means the control of the mind. There is a sharp sword in the tongue. One harsh word or a mild rebuke breaks a long-standing friendship and results in fighting and actual bloodshed. The restlessness of the world is due to too much talking, gossiping, back-biting and scandal-mongering. Ladies are more talkative. They disturb the peaceful atmosphere of their homes. If all people of the world practise Mowna for two hours daily this will undoubtedly contribute to the peace of the world to a considerable degree

5. THE PSEUDO-KARMA YOGI

A man puts on Khaddar clothes and dons a Khaddar cap. He will not have any of the qualifications or attributes of the man who has introduced Khaddar. He will not follow his instructions even. He may not have the least tinge of self-sacrifice. He may have a big almirah of mill-made clothes. He may do a little charity and feed some poor people just for the sake of name and fame. He himself will write to the papers about his charitable act in the name of a correspondent. He may donate a small sum to a public cause. He will eagerly watch in the newspapers whether his name is published or not. He will be restless till he sees his name in the papers. Such a man is called a pseudo-Karma Yogi. The world abounds now in such sort of Karma Yogis.

A landlord or a money-lender sucks the blood of poor peasants and builds a palace. He gives a donation of several thousands of pounds to a Hindu university out of his reserve fund of a hundred thousand. He builds a temple for a few thousands and puts his name on the marble slab in front of the temple in bold letters. This is not Karma Yoga. This is pompous advertisement for acquiring name and fame. On the other hand an ordinary labourer who earns a few shillings at the sweat of his brow may offer his money in charity by feeding a few starving or sick people, and may himself starve on that day. This is real self-sacrifice. This is real Karma Yoga.

In olden days, Madura in South India was ruled by Pandian kings. One of the Pandian kings spent two lacs of rupees in doing Utsava of Lord Soma Sundareshwar in a certain year. He had a great deal of ego or Abhimana. He thought within himself: "I am a great devotee of Lord Siva. I have spent a large sum of money in the worship of the Lord. Thousands of Brahmins, Sadhus and the poor have been fed. I have given rich presents to Brahmin Pandits. There is no king who is so pious as myself." Lord Siva appeared in his dream that night and said: "O king! Do not be proud of your piety, devotion and charity. I am not pleased with you in any way. Wherever there is pride, there cannot be any real devotion and holiness. Just go and see My humble devotee, the wood-cutter, who lives in a small hut on the banks of

the Vaighai, and who offers to Me a little Kheer made of broken rice and a little black sugar on Mondays. Learn from him what real devotion is." The king was greatly vexed. The next morning he proceeded to see the wood-cutter in his hut. He asked the wood-cutter: "How do you worship Lord Siva?" The man replied in a meek voice: "O king! I earn two annas a day. I spend one anna for my food, distribute nine pies in charity and save three pies daily. Every Monday I prepare a little Kheer with some broken rice and black sugar and offer it to Lord Siva. Whenever I cut wood, I always repeat 'Siva, Siva, Siva.' I always remember Him. This is my devotion to the Lord. I do not know anything else."

The king was very much pleased with the humility, simplicity, loving nature, devotion and purity of the wood-cutter. He erected a small building for him and made arrangements for his food till the end of his life. He learnt many practical lessons from his life and in turn became a real, humble devotee of Lord Siva. He destroyed his pride, vanity and egoism.

Lord Jesus says: "Your left hand should not know what the right hand does. Be meek when you serve. Die unknown. Let nobody know your name. But work and serve others. Do not expect approbation and applause. Then only real fragrance of your soul will come out."

Dear friends who tread the path of Karma Yoga! Be sincere at heart. Do not run after the shadowy

toys of name and fame. Name and fame are illusory. They are mere vibrations in the air. Nobody can earn an everlasting name in this Mayaic plane. Does anybody remember Sri Vyasa, Vasishtha, Vikramaditya, Yajnavalkya, Vama Dev and Jada Bharat now? Many great souls have come and gone. At the present time the names of one or two political leaders are remembered. After a few years their names also will disappear. Treat name and fame as offal, poison or vomited matted. This world is unreal. Care not for little perishable things. Care for the everlasting Reality only. Do constant selfless service silently with thoughts of God and Bhav within, and realize the indwelling presence. Become a true Karma Yogi.

6. MITHYACHARA

Mere physical control of the organs of action (Karma Indriyas such as speech, hands, feet, genitals and anus) will not do. You must not *think* of the objects of the senses. If you observe fasting during Ekadasi days to propitiate Lord Hari, and if your mind constantly thinks of various kinds of delicious food, you will not get the benefits of fasting. You will be regarded as a self-deluded man or hypocrite, *i.e.*, a man of sinful conduct (Mithyachara). That is the reason why Lord Krishna says in the Gita:

Karmendriyani samyamya ya aste manasa smaran,
Indriyarthan vimudhatma mithyacharah sa uchyate.

"Who sitteth, controlling the organs of action, but dwelling in his mind on the objects of the senses, that bewildered man is called a hypocrite." Ch. III-6.

The actions of the mind are the real actions. Thought is the real action. You must utilise the energy that is conserved by the control of organs for higher purposes at the altar of God. This will constitute Yoga. That passionate man who visits his legal wife frequently is more immoral than the man who occasionally goes to the house of ill-fame. That man who constantly dwells on sexual thoughts is highly immoral even though he observes physical Brahmacharya by controlling the body. He is the worst man. It is the thought that sways the body. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: "But who, controlling the senses (of knowledge) by the mind, O Arjuna, with the organs of action, without attachment performs Yoga by action, he is worthy." Ch. III-7.

Then the Lord praises action and further adds that one cannot keep up even his health if he remains inactive. So He says: "Perform then, right action, for action is superior to inaction, and even the very maintenance of the body would not be possible by inaction." Ch. III-8.

It is also wrong to think that actions lead to bondage, and that they should not, therefore be performed. Karma Yoga is performance of action with Sankhya understanding or poised reason that is not affected by loss or gain, success or failure. Lord

rishna gives valuable direction to Arjuna in the erformance of action. He says: "Unattached thou erform action." Ch. III-9. This is the secret of Karma Yoga.

7. INSTRUCTIONS TO ASPIRANTS

Pride, self-sufficiency, arrogance, irritability, self-assertive Rajasic nature, curiosity about the affairs of other people and hypocrisy are all obstacles to the practice of meditation. Subtle forms of these Vrittis lurk in the mind. They operate as oceanic under-currents. Under pressure of Yoga and meditation various kinds of impurities in the mind come out, just as the dirt of a room that has been shut up for six months, comes out when you carefully sweep. Aspirants should introspect and watch their minds. They should remove their weaknesses one by one by applying suitable effective methods. Pride is inveterate. Its branches ramify in all directions in the regions of the Rajasic mind. Again and again it manifests although the wave subsides temporarily for some time. It asserts when opportunities arise.

If the aspirant has the nature of being offended easily over triflling things, he cannot make any progress in meditation. He should cultivate an amiable, loving nature and adaptability. Then this bad quality will disappear. Some aspirants easily get offended if their bad qualities and defects are pointed out They become indignant and begin to fight with th

man who points out the defects. They think that the man is concocting them out of jealousy and hatred. This is bad. Other people can very easily find out our defects. A man who has no life of introspection, whose mind is of out-going tendencies (Bahirmukha Vritti) cannot find out his own mistakes. The self-conceit acts as a veil and blurs the mental vision. If an aspirant wants to grow he must admit his defects if they are pointed out by others. He must try his level best to eradicate them and must thank the man who points them out. Then only can he grow in spirituality and meditation.

It becomes a difficult task to eradicate the self-assertive nature. Every man has built his personality from Anadi Kala (beginningless time). He has also given a long rope to the Rajasic mind to have its own ways. This personality has grown very strong. It becomes difficult to bend this personality and make it pliable and elastic. The man of self-assertive nature wants to dominate over others. He does not want to hear the opinions and arguments of others, even though they are logical and reasonable. He has a pair of jaundiced eyes with Timira also. He will say: "Whatever I say is correct. Whatever I do is correct. The actions and views of others are incorrect. I am infallible." He will never admit his mistakes. He will try his level best to support his own whimsical views by crooked arguments and reasonings. If arguments fail he will take to vituperation and hand -

to hand fight also. If people fail to show respect and honour to him he is thrown into a state of fury. He is immensely pleased when someone begins to flatter him. He will tell any number of lies to justify himself. Self-justification goes hand in hand with the self-assertive nature. This is a very dangerous habit. He can never grow in spirituality and meditation so long as he has the self-assertive nature with the habit of self-justification. The self-assertive man should change his mental attitude. He must develop the habit of looking at matters from the view-point of others. He must have a new vision of righteousness and truthfulness. An aspirant should treat respect and honour as offal and poison, and censure and insult as ornaments and as nectar.

Man finds it difficult to adjust to the ways and habits of others. His mind is filled with prejudice of caste, creed and colour. He is quite intolerant. He thinks that his views, opinions and ways of living are right and that the views of others are incorrect. The fault-finding nature is ingrained in him. He jumps at once to find faults in others. He has morbid eyes. He cannot see the good in others. He cannot appreciate the meritorious actions of others. He talks of his own abilities and actions. That is the reason why he fights with people all around and cannot keep up friendship with others for a long time. Aspirants do not make progress in the path because they too have these defects to a great degree. They should eradicate

them by developing tolerance, pure love and other Sattwic qualities.

Introspect. Look within. Try to remove all your defects. This is real Sadhana. This is the most difficult Sadhana. You will have to do it at any cost. Mere intellectual development is nothing. It is easy. Sit in the Central Library at Baroda or in the Calcutta Library for six years with a dictionary at your side: you can develop your intellect. But the former needs a great deal of struggle for many years. Many old vicious habits will have to be rent asunder. There are many famous and learned Sannyasins and Pandits who can deliver lectures for a week on one Sloka of the Gita and the Upanishads. They command respect and yet they are disliked by the public because they still have great defects. They have not done any drastic Sadhana to remove their defects. They have developed only their intellect to a high degree. What a great pity!

The old Samskaras of vanity, cunningness, crookedness, arrogance, petty-mindedness, fighting nature, pride, self-esteem or thinking too much of one's self, speaking ill of others, belittling others, may be still lurking in your mind. You cannot shine unless you remove them thoroughly. Success in meditation is not possible without eradication of these undesirable negative qualities of the lower nature.

Those who engage themselves frequently in hot debates, vain discussions, wrangling, lingual warfare

and intellectual gymnastics cause serious damage to to the astral body. Much energy is wasted. Hostility is the result. Time is wasted. The astral body gets actually inflamed by heated discussions. An open sore is formed in the astral body. The blood becomes hot. It bubbles like milk over the fire. Ignorant people have no idea of the disastrous effects caused by unnecessary heated discussions and vain argumentation. Those who have the habit of arguing unnecessarily and entering into vain discussions cannot expect to make an iota of progress in the spiritual path. They must entirely give up arguing and discussions. They should destroy the impulses of arguing through careful introspection.

You have heard several eloquent lectures delivered by learned Sanniyasins. You have heard Kathas, discourses and exposition of the Gita, Ramayana and the Upanishads. You have heard several valuable moral and spiritual instructions. But you have not at all endeavoured to put anything into serious earnest practice and to do protracted solid Sadhana. Mere intellectual assent to religious ideas, a little closing of the eyes in the morning and at night just to deceive oneself and the Indweller, a little endeavour to stick to the daily spiritual routine and to develop some virtues in a half-hearted careless manner, some mild effort to carry out the instructions of your spiritual preceptor perfunctorily, will not suffice. This kind of mentality should be entirely given up. An aspirant

should follow the instructions of his Guru and the teachings of the scriptures to the very letter. No leniency should be allowed to the mind. There can be no half measures in the spiritual path. You cannot say: "I will see to them later on. I can devote more time when I retire. I have followed the instructions as far as possible or more or less." This 'more or less' and 'as far as possible' business is disastrous to an aspirant. There is neither 'exception to the general rule' nor 'allowing margin' nor any 'discount' in the practice of spiritual instructions. Exact, implicit, strict obedience to the instructions is expected of you.

Do not make thoughtless remarks. Do not speak even a single idle word. Give up idle talk, long talk, big talk and loose talk. Become silent. Do not assert for rights in this physical, illusory plane. Do not fight for rights. Think more about your duties and less about your rights. Asserting for rights comes out of Rajasic egoism. These rights are worthless. It is wasting of time and energy. Assert your birthright of God-consciousness. 'Thou art Brahman'—assert this real birthright. Then you are a wise man.

If you are endowed with good character, mercy, Brahmacharya, truthfulness, pure love, tolerance and serenity, these qualities will more than counterbalance many evil qualities you may possess. In time to come the evil qualities also will vanish if you are careful and if you focus your attention on them.

If you remain in the company of a developed saint,

you will be immensely benefited by his magnetic aura and spiritual currents. His company will be like a fortress for you. You will not be affected by evil influences. There is no fear of a downfall. You can have rapid spiritual progress. The company of a saint hastens remarkably the growth of Sattwic virtues in the aspirant and gives him strength to awaken the dormant powers and to eradicate undesirable negative qualities and various defects. Young aspirants should remain in the company of their Gurus or saints till they are firmly moulded or established in the spiritual path and in deep meditation. In these days many young aspirants wander aimlessly from place to place and do not want to hear the instructions of their teachers or experienced saints. Hence they do not make any progress in spirituality. They remain as burdens on society. They have not elevated themselves. They are of no use to others also. They are free gentlemen at large!

A sense of humour is a rare gift of nature. It helps the aspirants in their march on the spiritual path. It removes depression. It keeps one cheerful. It brings joy and mirth to others also. But you must not cut such jokes as would wound the feelings of others. The humorous remarks must educate and correct others. They should serve the purpose of spiritual teachings. One should laugh in a mild and delicate manner. Silly giggling, guffaw or boisterous, indecent and unrefined laughter in a rude manner should be

completely avoided. They prevent the spiritual progress of the aspirant and destroy serenity of the mind and serious magnanimous attitude. The sage smiles through the eyes. It is grand and thrilling. Only intelligent aspirants can understand this. Do not be childish and silly.

Even slight annoyance and irritability affects the mind and the astral body. Aspirants should not allow these evil Vrittis to manifest in the mind-lake. They may burst out as big waves of anger at any moment, if you are careless and weak. They should be nipped in the bud through the practice of forgiveness, love and sympathy for others. There should not be the least disturbance in the mind-lake. It should be calm and perfectly serene. Then only will meditation be possible.

Just as a turbulent horse carries away the rider along with him, so also the emotion of anger carries away the little Jiva who has no self-control. He becomes a helpless victim of emotion. Just as a capable rider controls the horses and reaches the destination safely, so also a man of self-restraint controls the emotion of anger, enjoys peace and reaches the goal of life.

A terrible fit of anger shatters the physical nervous system and produces a deep and lasting impression on the inner astral body. Dark arrows shoot from the astral body. The germs that cause an epidemic of Spanish flu may die, but the wave of influenza still

continues in various parts for a long time. Even so, though the effect of a fit of anger in the mind subsides in a short time, the vibration or wave continues to exist for days and weeks together in the Linga Sarira or astral body. Slight unpleasant feeling that lasts in the mind for five minutes may produce vibrations in the astral body for two or three days. A terrible fit of wrath will produce deep inflammation of the astral body. It will take several months for the healing of the ulcer. Have you realized now the disastrous consequences of anger? Do not become a victim of this terrible malady. Control it by the practice of mercy, love, sympathy, Vichara and tolerance.

Worry, depression, unholy thoughts, anger and hatred produce a kind of crust or dark layer on the surface of the mind or astral body. This crust or rust or dirt prevents the beneficial influences to get entry inside and allows the evil force or lower influences to operate. Worry does great harm to the astral body and the mind. Energy is wasted by the worry-habit. Nothing is gained by worrying. It causes inflammation of the astral body and drains the vitality of man. It should be eradicated by vigilant introspection and by keeping the mind fully occupied.

Do not relax your efforts. Keep the divine flame burning steadily. You are nearing the goal now. Thy light has come now. There is Brahmic aura in your face. You have crossed many peaks and insurmountable summits in the spiritual path by dint of your

untiring and patient Sadhana. It is highly creditable. You have made remarkable progress indeed! I am highly pleased with you, O Swaroopananda! You have still to ascend one more peak and go through one narrow pass. This demands still more patient efforts and strength. You will have to melt the Sattwic egoism also. You will have to transcend the blissful state of Savikalpa Samadhi also. You can do it. I am quite confident.

Have a strong determination and strong will. Do not think of returning home after taking up Nivritti Marga. Look before you leap. Have courage, fixity of mind and a definite purpose in life. Be not wavering. Are you ready to give up all possessions, including your body and life? Then alone come to me. Then alone take to Nivritti Marga and embrace Sannyasa. Think twice before you come to definite conclusions. This is not a rosy path as you may think. It is full of thorns. It is beset with countless trials and difficulties. Be humble, patient and persevering. Never care for Siddhis or quick awakening of the Kundalini. I shall serve you. Be not troubled. Be not anxious. I am your servant always. Be noble-minded. Mere emotional bubbling will not help you much. Some young men have returned to their homes. There are many difficulties in this path. A man of patience, perseverance and iron will alone can tread this path. This path can make you a King of kings. This path is easy for a man of determination, patience, endurance,

self-sacrifice, dispassion, discrimination and strong will.

Those who want to take to seclusion and Nivritti Marga should observe Mowna, non-mixing and discipline of the Indriyas, mind and body while living in the world. They should train themselves to a hard, laborious life, coarse food, sleeping on the ground or on a hard mattress without pillows, walking barefooted and refraining to use umbrellas. Then they can bear the rigorous austerities of an ascetic's life. They should give up timidity and shyness in getting alms. Those who want to have an independent living should bring Rs. 1,600. This will fetch an interest of Rs. 5 monthly. Times have changed now. It is difficult to get Bhiksha. There is a cry for work everywhere. Sannyasins should keep money now for the maintenance of Sannyasa itself. They must have economical independence. Then only can they get along smoothly with their spiritual Sadhana.

By continence, devotion to the Guru and steady practice, success in Yoga comes after a long time. The aspirant should always be patient in his efforts.

Aspirants who take to Nivritti Marga generally become lazy after some time, as they do not know how to utilise their mental energy, as they do not keep daily routine, and as they do not follow the instructions of the preceptors. They get Vairagya, but they have no experience in the spiritual line. They do not make any progress in the end. Intense

and constant meditation is necessary for entering into Samadhi.

If the Yogic student who practises meditation is gloomy, depressed and weak, surely there is some error in his meditation. Meditation makes one strong, cheerful and healthy. If aspirants themselves are gloomy and peevish how are they going to impart joy, peace and strength to others!

Master every step in Yoga. Gradually ascend the successive stages boldly and cheerfully. Do not take a higher step before you completely master the lower one. This is the royal road to perfect meditation and Samadhi.

The student and the teacher should live together as father and devoted son or as husband and wife with extreme sincerity and devotion. Aspirants must have an eager receptive attitude to imbibe the teachings of the master. Then only will they be spiritually benefited, otherwise there is not the least hope of spiritual life and spiritual progress of the aspirant and complete regeneration of his old Asuric life.

It is a great pity that the present system of education in India is not favourable for the spiritual growth of a Sadhaka. The minds of students are saturated with materialistic poison. Aspirants of the present day have not any idea of the true relationship of a student and a Guru. It is not like the relationship of a student and a teacher or professor in schools and colleges. Spiritual relationship is quite different.

It entails complete dedication. It is very sacred. It is purely divine. Turn the pages of the Upanishads. In days of yore Brahmacharins used to approach their teachers with profound humility, sincerity and Bhav with sacred sticks (Samiths) in their hands.

Have you fully determined with an iron will to stick to this line at any cost? Are you prepared to sacrifice this body and life in the cause of truth? Have you understood the glory and importance of Sannyasa and seclusion? If your daughter, brother or mother comes here and weeps, have you the strength of mind to resist Moha?

I shall keep you in the Gherua (orange-coloured) cloth, with holy thread and tuft of hair for some time. This is preparatory to Sannyasa. After studying your Vritti and mental state I shall initiate you into Sannyasa with proper Vedic rites, Vraja Homa, etc.

After coming here can you cut off your connections with your relatives? Can you stop all correspondence with your friends? Do not hide anything. Be very [illegible] frank and candid like a child. Speak the truth now. Open your heart.

Aspirants do not have unshakable faith in the Guru or in the Srutis. They have half or wavering faith. That is the reason why they fail to attain success in Yoga or Jnana.

Sri Vasishthaji says to Sri Rama: "Even though one may find refuge in a Guru, it is only through

his own effort and will that he can destroy all pains arising from the association with diverse objects and kinsmen." (Story of Bali—Yoga Vasishtha).

Many foolishly think that one drop of water from the Kamandal of a Sannyasin or Yogi, or a small magic pill will transmute them into divinities, will awaken the Kundalini and put them into Samadhi within the twinkling of an eye. They themselves do not wish to do any kind of Sadhana. They expect that the Guru should do everything for them. They want the 'master's touch' or 'influence'. Queer people indeed, with strange preposterous ideas!

You can know the unknowable Brahman through purity of mind, by serving the Guru who is a Brahmanishtha (who is established in Brahman), by getting lessons from him and by practising constant meditation.

When the mind is concentrated on one thing, there will arise in it, through the action of the Guru, another kind of knowledge not anticipated. Though initiation by an Acharya will not by itself enable a person to obtain Jnana, it will be the means of developing Jnana in him.

Sleepless vigilance is necessary if you wish to have rapid spiritual advancement. Never rest contented with a little achievement or success in the path, a little serenity of mind, a little one-pointedness, some visions of angels, some Siddhis, a little faculty of thought reading, etc. There are still higher summits

to ascend, higher regions to climb.

Be ever ready to serve. Serve with pure love, kindness and courtesy. Never grumble or murmur during service. Never show a wry or gloomy face when you serve. The man whom you serve will refuse to accept such service. You will lose an opportunity. Watch for opportunities to serve. Never miss a single chance. Create opportunities. Create field for good service. Create work.

Live a life of utter devotion to service. Fill your heart with fervour and enthusiasm for service. Live only to be a blessing to others. If you want to achieve this you will have to refine your mind. You will have to polish your character. You will have to mould or build your character. You should develop sympathy, affection, benevolence, tolerance and humility. Do not fight with others if their view-point differs from you. There are many types of minds. There are many modes of thinking. There are honest differences of opinion. There are various shades of opinion. Every one is correct from his own view-point. Adjust yourself to their views. Hear their views also with love, sympathy and attention and give them a place. Come out of the centre of your small egoistic narrow circle and have a broader vision. Have catholic or liberal views. Give a place for the views of all. Then only will you have an expanded life and a very large heart. You must speak sweetly and gently in a courteous manner. You must talk very little. You must eradi-

cate undesirable thoughts and feelings. There mu
not be the least tinge of pride and irritability. Yo
must forget yourself entirely. You must not reserve
even a trace of personal element or feeling. Complete
dedication to service is needed. If you are equipped
with the above qualification, you are a beacon-light
and a rare blessing to the world at large. You are in-
deed a rare and sweet flower whose delicious aroma
will permeate and pervade throughout the length and
breadth of the land. You would have attained the
exalted state of Buddhahood.

Be polite, courteous, kind, obliging and helpful,
not now and then, not by fits and starts, but all the
time, all throughout your life's career. Never speak
a word that can jar or offend others. Think before
you speak and see whether what you are going to say
will not hurt the feelings of others, whether it is
sensible, sweet, truthful and soft. Carefully note
beforehand what will be the consequences of your
houghts, speech and actions. You may fail in the
eginning several times, but you are bound to attain
uccess in the end if you persist in the practice.

You must not do any work perfunctorily or in a
reless, half-hearted manner, without taking any in-
est. You cannot evolve if you take this attitude
mind. The whole heart, mind, intellect and soul
t be in the work. Then only can you call it Yoga
shwararpana. Some peeple have their hands at
vork, the mind at the market, the intellect in the

office and the soul upon the wife or son. This is bad. You must do all work efficiently and perfectly. The motto should be: 'One thing at a time and that done well is a very good rule as many can tell.' If your Guru or friend asks you to wash a towel, take his clothes also for washing without his knowledge. If your preceptor says: "Amritam, bring me some groundnut oil," extract the oil in the twinkling of an eye and take it in a cup to your Guru. Run to him with the cup in your hand, with panting breath, with your body bathed in profuse perspiration, and say: "O venerable Master, dispeller of my ignorance! Here is the oil for thee." If a passer-by asks for a a cup of water, say to him with courtesy, in sweet words: "Brother, take your seat. Here is water. Here is a cup of milk for you. Rest awhile on this seat. I shall shampoo your legs and fan you. You are tired." This is real service. This is real Yoga. If you do service with this mental attitude for one or two years, you will become an entirely changed being, a veritable God-man on this earth.

Do not do anything in a surry-scurry, in haste or flurry. Do every bit of work with a cool, unruffled mind. Be perfectly accurate in doing any kind of work. Collect all your scattered thoughts and apply your full mind to the work on hand. Many spoil their work by doing it in haste without reflection or consideration. They repent later on. This is bad. Take your own time, it does not matter. But do it well

with scientific or geometrical accuracy in a dexterous and masterly manner.

Be on the alert when you do service in society. Unselfish service of any kind, platform lectures or any kind of public activity will surely bring name and fame. Name and fame will destroy you like a canker in a blossom or in a young plant. Treat name and fame as poison. Become very, very humble. Let this virtue be ingrained in your heart, in every cell, in every nerve, in every fibre of your being. Many have had their downfall by becoming victims to this powerful intoxicant, name and fame. Their progress was stopped. Hence I seriously warn you.

You must develop to a remarkable degree the spirit of discrimination, discernment, alacrity, alertness, the faculty of 'Daksha' (expertness) which will help you to decide a right line of action when you are in a dilemma. Then only will you be able to find out what is exactly required at a critical juncture or at the right time and not an hour afterwards. You will not regret afterwards in any way.

It is extremely difficult to have a calm and pure mind. But you must have such a mind if you want to progress in meditation, if you desire to do Nishkamya Karma Yoga. Then only will you have a perfect instrument, a well-controlled mind at your disposal. This is one of the most important qualifications for aspirants. You will have to struggle hard for a long time with patience and perseverance to get this.

Nothing is impossible for a Sadhaka who has an iron will and strong determination.

You must not be discouraged even a bit by repeated failures. You should know the causes which brought about the failures and should be careful in future to avoid them. You will have to fortify yourself carefully. In your weakness lies the secret of your strength. You will have to stick doggedly to your ideals, convictions and Sadhana despite repeated failures, and march boldly on the path. Say: "Come what may, I will surely come out with perfect success in this spiritual struggle. I will realize the Self in this very birth, nay, this very second. Failures or slips cannot in any way affect me."

I am always ready to help you. My sympathies are ever with you. I will radiate joy, peace and thought-currents of love towards you. I will inspire you. But I cannot do the work for you. You yourself will have to do the work. The struggle and exertion must come [illegible]om your side. A hungry man will have to eat for [illegible]. A thirsty man will have to drink for himself. You will have to place each step yourself on the spiritual ladder. Remember this point always.

Hey Saumya! Dear immortal soul! Be bold. Be cheerful even though you are on the roll of unemployment, even though you have nothing to eat, even though you are clad in rags. Thy essential nature is Satchidananda. The outer cloak, this mortal physical sheath is an illusory Mayaic production. Smile, laugh,

whistle and dance in joy and ecstasy. Sing 'Om, Om, Om', 'Ram, Ram, Ram', 'Shyam, Shyam, Shyam', 'Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivoham', 'Soham, Soham, Soham'. Come out of this cage of flesh. Thou art not this perishable body. Thou art the immortal soul. Thou art the sexless Atman. Thou art the son of the King of kings, of the Emperor of emperors—the Brahman of the Upanishads, the Atman that dwells in the chambers of your heart (Hridaya Guha). Act as such, feel as such and claim your birthright, not from tomorrow or the day after, but right now at this very second. *Tat Twam Asi*—Thou art That.

Chapter Four

KARMA AND FREEDOM

1. FREE WILL

How far a man is a free agent of his actions must be intelligently understood in the light of Vedanta. Then only can one get a satisfactory answer and solution. In the West, various competent men have discussed this matter from various standpoints. They have not yet come to any definite conclusions. They have taken the present only into consideration. This is a sad mistake. The present is only a fragment of infinity. If the infinite past and infinite future are also taken into consideration, they will surely arrive at a definite conclusion that will bring peace and solace to the restless mind. Just as the man who has seen one side of the shield only fights with another man who has seen the other side of the shield only, so also people who know partial truths only fight amongst themselves and engage in useless controversies and debates. Just as the man who has seen the two sides of the shield can easily settle the dispute of two persons who have seen one side of the shield only, so also a Vedantin alone, who has full knowledge of the whole truth can settle the dispute of those people who are trying to find out whether and how far man is a free agent of his

actions.

Determinists say that the will of a man is as much bound by the law of causation as the rest of the phenomena of the universe. Ethics will fall down to pieces if there is no freedom for a man. There cannot be surely any moral responsibility where there is no freedom. How could a man be made to account for his action, unless he is a free agent of his deeds? How could reward or punishment be meted out with justice to a man if he has done an action out of compulsion, but not out of free choice? Man will be like and automaton or block of wood, his hands and feet being chained down tightly.

The consciousness of the Self makes a man feel that he is ever free. This idea of freedom is ingrained in the mind of every man. It is hidden in the consciousness of the Self. Though he has nothing to eat, though he is in very adverse circumstances, there is a peculiar instinct in man that prompts him to think that he is always free. Because the Nitya-Mukta (ever free) Atman is at the back of his mind, sentiments and feelings, he feels that he is free. He knows that he is bound and that he is encased in this tabernacle of flesh. He is fully aware that he is a slave of Maya and Avidya: and yet something inside tells him that he is free at the same time. He has this double feeling because in essence he is the all-pervading mass of wisdom (Vijnanaghana Atman). He gets these flashes or glimpses of freedom even while he labours under

straitened circumstances. There are encouragenemts for the struggling soul that come from within. He is in a dying condition. Doctors have pronounced the case as absolutely hopeless. Yet there is a shrill inner voice from within that says: 'I am immortal, I am free.' He cherishes an inherent feeling: 'I am free though I appear to be apparently bound. This bondage is illusory.'

Let me repeat here the words of Lord Krishna in the Gita, that bespeak of the freedom of man in doing Karma:

Uddhared Armana Atmanam Natmanam Avasadayet
Atmaiva Hyatmano Bandhuratmaiva Ripuratmanah.

"Let a man raise himself by himself, let him not lower himself; for he alone is the friend of himself, he alone is the enemy of himself." Ch. VI-5.

Bandhuratmatmanastasya Yenatmaivaatmana Jitah
Anatmanastu Satrurvai Vartetmaiva Satruvat.

"To him who has conquered himself by himself, his own self is the friend of himself, but to him who has not (conquered) himself, his own self stands in the place of an enemy like the (external) foe." Ch. VI-6.

The Upanishads also echo the same idea:

Uttishthata Jagrata Prapya Varan Nibodhata.

"Awake, arise, and, having approached a learned teacher, learn." (Katha Upanishad).

In conclusion I wish to point out once more that man is a free agent. He is Svatantra or independent in doing actions. Whatever his present condition may be, he can have a glorious future through right exertion and right thinking. Many have achieved success and greatness, many have reached the goal of life through right exertion. This holds good for all. Man is ever free. May freedom be the goal of thy life! May all of us exert in the right direction to achieve freedom, the birthright of man! May that supreme Being, the Antaryamin, guide us in all our actions!

2. PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT AND WRONG

Right and wrong, Dharma and Adharma, are both relative terms. It is very difficult to define these terms precisely. Even sages are bewildered sometimes in finding out what is right and what is wrong in some special circumstances. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "What is action, what is inaction? Even the wise are herein perplexed. Therefore I declare to thee the action by knowing which thou shalt be liberated from evil. It is needful to discriminate action, to discriminate unlawful action, and to discriminate inaction; mysterious is the path of action. He who seeth inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is harmonious, even while performing all actions." Ch

IV-16, 17, 18.

I shall try to explain the terms *right* and *wrong*. Rishi Kanada, the author of Vaiseshika philosophy says in the opening Sutra: "That which brings Nisreyasa and Abhyudaya (supreme bliss and exaltation), is Dharma. That which elevates you and brings you nearer to God is right. That which takes you down and away from God is wrong. That which is done in strict accordance with the injunctions of the Sastras is right, and that which is done against the injunctions of the Sastras is wrong." This is one way of defining these terms. To work in accordance with the Divine Will is right; to work in opposition to the Divine Will is wrong.

It is very difficult to find out by the man in the street what exactly the Divine Will is in certain actions. That is the reason why wise sages declare that people should resort to Sastras, learned Pandits and realized persons for consultation. A pure man who has done Nishkamya Karma Yoga for several years and who has done worship of Ishwara for a long time can readily find out the Divine Will when he wants to do certain actions. He can hear the inner shrill, small voice. Ordinary people should not attempt to hear this Divine Voice, the voice of God—they may mistake the voice of the impure mind for the voice of God. The lower instinctive mind will delude them.

That work which gives elevation, joy and peace

to the mind is right; that which brings depression, pain and restlessness to the mind is wrong. This is an easy way to find out right and wrong. Selfishness clouds understanding. Therefore if a man has even a tinge of selfishness he cannot detect what is right and wrong. A very pure, subtle, sharp intellect is needed for this purpose. The Gita describes the nature of Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic natures in chapter eighteen as follows:

"That which knows the path of work and renunciation, what ought to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation—that intellect is Sattwic (pure), O Arjuna. That by which one wrongly understands Dharma and Adharma and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done—that intellect, O Arjuna, is Rajasic. That which, enveloped in darkness, sees *Dharma* as *Adharma*, and all things perverted—that intellect is Tamasic."

Various other definitions are given by wise men to help the students in the path of righteousness. In the Bible it is said: "Do unto others as you would be done by." This is a very good maxim. The whole gist of Sadachara or right conduct is found here. If one practises this very carefully he will not commit any wrong act. *Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*—non-injury is the highest virtue. If one is well established in Ahimsa in thought, word and deed, he can never do any wrong action. That is the reason why Patanjali Maharishi has given Ahimsa great prominence in his

Raja Yoga philosophy. Ahimsa comes first in the practice of Yama or self-restraint. To give pleasure to others is right; to spread misery and pain to others is wrong. One can follow this in his daily conduct towards others and can evolve in the spiritual path. Do not perform any act that brings shame and fear. You will be quite safe if you follow this rule. Stick to any rule that appeals to your reason and conscience and follow it with faith and attention. You will evolve and reach the abode of eternal bliss.

Now I shall talk to you on another important point. I have already pointed out in the beginning of this chapter that 'right' and 'wrong' are relative terms. They vary according to time, special circumstances, Varna and Ashrama. Morality is a changing and relative term. To kill an enemy is right for a Kshatriya king. A Brahmin or a Sannyasin should not kill anyone even for protecting himself during times of danger. He should practise strict forbearance and forgiveness. To speak an untruth to save the life of a Mahatma or one's Guru who has been unjustly charged by an unjust officer of a state is right. Untruth becomes a truth in this particular case. To speak a truth which brings harm to many in untruth only. To kill a dacoit who murders wayfarers daily is Ahimsa only. Himsa becomes Ahimsa under certain circumstances.

There are special Dharmas during critical and dangerous circumstances. They are called Apat-

Dharma. Rishi Viswamitra took forbidden meat from a Chandala when there was severe famine and offered this in his sacrifice to the Devas. Ushashti, a learned sage took the Ucchishta beans from the hands of an elephant-driver when he was suffering from acute hunger and when he was not able to get food from anyone. Performance of one's own duties brings happiness, quick evolution and freedom.

3. AS YOU SOW SO SHALL YOU REAP

This world runs on well-established laws. There is no chaos. There is no such thing as accident or chance in life. Events occur in succession or order. There is perfect harmony. The child grows, attains boyhood and adolescence, begets children, decays and dies. The child becomes a father and the father brings forth a child. How is it that a human being is born of a human being, a horse of a horse, a cat of a cat, a dog of a dog, and a monkey of a monkey. A seed sprouts and comes out with leaves, stems, twigs and flowers. It brings forth fruits and seeds in due seasons. A seed from this fruit brings forth a tree like the parent tree. The seed of a mango tree cannot give rise to the growth of a Jambu tree. How is it that only a mango tree comes out of a mango seed, a Jambu tree from the Jambu seed, an apple tree from an apple seed? This is a great mystery indeed. There is some mysterious power that is working behind all these phenomena. That mysterious, all-pervading power or

intelligence is God. He who sows paddy reaps paddy. He who sows green gram reaps green gram. He who sows oranges reaps oranges. Man sows the seed to attain what he desires to reap. Even so, man does evil deeds and reaps the fruits of pain. He who does virtuous actions reaps good fruits. One reaps the fruits according to his Karmas or actions.

How is it that one man is a king, another is a beggar, one is a genius while another is a fool, one man is very wealthy while another is in want, one is always in good health while another is constantly ailing, one is handsome while another is ugly, one man is wicked while another is a saint, one dies at the age of ten while another dies at the age of ninety? Is this due to heredity? Certainly not. The operating cause is Karma. He who has done Tapas, meditation, had Satsang with Mahatmas, served saints and devotees and lead a life of purity is born as a Yogi or a saint in this birth. He who had done vicious actions in his previous birth is born as a wicked man. He who had done a lot of charity in his previous birth is born as a king. It is only the theory of Karma that can explain things beautifully and satisfactorily. Lord Krishna says: "Whosoever at the end leaves the body, thinking of any being, to that being only does he go, O son of Kunti, because of his constant thought of that being." Ch. VIII-6.

Avidya (ignorance), Kama (desire), and Karma (selfish action) are the three Granthis or knots which

bind a man to the wheel of Samsara. Man first entertains a desire to have a blanket. He says: 'Winter is very severe now. I desire to get a blanket.' Then he begins to think where he can get it. He now decides to get it from the local departmental store. He takes the money, proceeds to the store and purchases the blanket. He had desire at first. Then the thought made its appearance. Then there was Karma or action of moving and purchasing. The three things, viz., the desire, the thought and the action always go together. Desire and thought are internal acts. Action is external. If a man entertains good desires, he gets good thoughts and does good actions. If a man cherishes evil desires, he develops evil thoughts and does evil actions. It is the thought that develops the character of a man. If one cultivates thoughts of mercy, love, tolerance, generosity and understanding he exhibits these virtues in his character and behaviour towards others in society. The same rule applied to the sowing of seeds in the soil also applies here. If one sows the virtue of mercy, he reaps a good harvest of mercy. He becomes a merciful man. If one sows cruelty, he reaps a good harvest of cruelty. He does cruel deeds. One can change his habits, thoughts and character by developing good habits and thoughts. It is the thought that moves the body to action. There is thought behind every action. There is desire behind thought.

Do not allow the desires to control your thoughts.

Do not be carried away easily by all sorts of desires through emotion. When a desire manifests, cogitate, think well. Reason out whether this particular desire towards the particular object will bring maximum happiness and minimum pain. If it is otherwise, reject it ruthlessly. Do not try to fulfil it. You must control desire through thoughts. You must not allow a desire to overrule the thought. You must slowly gain the strength to control a desire. A desire, when controlled, becomes transmuted into will. You will gain will-force. Many people fall a prey to their desires and are tossed about hither and thither helplessly like a straw in the wind. This is a great pity. That man who has gained control over desires and thoughts is really a powerful and happy man.

Learn to become wise. Learn to discriminate. Learn to control thoughts and desires. Watch your thoughts carefully. Do not allow any evil thought to enter the gates of the mental factory. Nip it in the bud. Always entertain holy, sublime thoughts and desires. Renounce unholy thoughts and unholy desires. Develop passion for Self-realization. This one strong and holy desire will annihilate all other worldly desires. Understand well the theory of Karma. Cut the three knots of Avidya and realize Satchidananda. Then you are beyond the operation of the law of Karma. Then you are a Jivanmukta or a liberated sage even while living. This is the highest goal of life. This is your highest duty. All other duties are second-

ary and self-imposed through Abhimana, ignorance and delusion.

4. MAN CAN OUTGROW ENVIRONMENTS

It is often said that man is the resultant of his environmental forces. This is not true. We cannot believe this, because the facts always prove the contrary. Many of the world's greatest men have been born in poverty and in adverse circumstances. Many who have been born in slums and filthy surroundings have risen to the highest status in the world. They have won laurels of fame and distinguished themselves in politics, literature and poetry. They have become brilliant geniuses and beacon-lights of the world. How do you account for this?

Sri T. Muthuswamy Aiyer, the first Indian High Court judge in Madras was born in absolute poverty. He had to study at night under municipal lanterns. He had insufficient food. He was clad in rags. He struggled hard and achieved greatness. He rose above the environmental forces by his strong will and iron determination.

In the West sons of cobblers and fishermen have risen to high positions. Boys who did polishing of boots in the streets and who were selling beer in bars and were cooking in hotels became famous poets and able journalists. Johnson was placed in quite adverse environments. Goldsmith was "passing rich with

forty pounds a year." Sir Walter Scott was very poor. He had no place to live in. The life of James Ramsay Macdonald is worth mentioning. He was a man of great Purushartha. He rose from poverty to power, from a field-labourer to the status of Prime Minister of Britain. His first job was addressing envelopes for ten shillings a week. He was so poor to buy tea that he drank water instead. His main meal every day for months was a three-penny beefsteak pudding. He was a pupil-teacher. He took great interest in politics and science. He was a journalist. Gradually, through right exertion (Purushartha), he rose to the position of a Prime Minister.

Sri Sankaracharya, the exponent of Adwaita philosophy, a spiritual giant and a brilliant genius was born in very poor, unfavourable environment and circumstances. There are thousands of instances like these. It is quite obvious, therefore, that unfavourable environments cannot annihilate the potential greatness and excellence of the future geniuses and that one can outgrow environments through diligent application, integrity, sincerity of purpose, iron will and strong determination.

Every man is born with his Samskaras. The mind is not a *Tabularasa* or a blank sheet of paper. It contains the impressions of thoughts and actions of the previous births. Samskaras are the latent potentialities. These good Samskaras are valuable assets for a man. Even though he is placed in unfavourable

environments, these Samskaras give him protection against extraneous, undesirable, hostile influences. They help his growth and evolution. In the Gita Lord Krishna says: "There he recovereth the characteristics belonging to his former body and with these he again laboureth for perfection, O joy of the Kurus." Ch. VI-43.

Miss not any opportunity. Avail yourself of all opportunities. Every opportunity is meant for your uplift and development. If you see a sick man lying down on the roadside in a helpless condition, take him on your back or tonga to the nearest hospital. Nurse him. Give him hot milk or tea or coffee. Shampoo his legs with divine Bhav. Feel the all-pervading, all-permeating, inter-penetrating indwelling God in him. See divinity in the glow of his eyes, in his cry, in his breath, in the pulsation and motion of his lungs. God has given this opportunity to you to develop mercy and love, to purify your heart and to remove Ghrina, hatred and jealousy. Sometimes if you are very timid, God will place you in such circumstances wherein you will be forced to exhibit courage and presence of mind by risking your life. Those world figures who have risen to eminence have utilised all opportunities to the best advantage. God shapes the mind of human beings by giving them opportunities.

Remember that in your weakness lies the strength, because you will be always on your alert to safeguard

yourself. Poverty has its own virtues. Poverty infuses humility, strength, power of endurance and the spirit of struggle and perseverance, whereas luxury begets laziness, pride, weakness, inertia and all sorts of evil habits.

Do not grumble, therefore, of bad environments. Create your own mental world and environments. That man who tries to evolve or grow in adverse environments will be a very strong man indeed. Nothing can shake him. He will be of a sterner stuff. He will have strong nerves. Man is certainly not a creature of environments or circumstances. He can control and modify them by his capacities, thoughts, good actions and right exertions (Purushartha). Theevra Purushartha can change the destiny. That is the reason why Vasishthaji and Bhishma have placed Purushartha above destiny. Therefore, dear brothers, exert, conquer nature and rejoice in the eternal Satchidananda Atma.

5. MAN IS THE MASTER OF HIS DESTINY

Some ignorant people say: "Karma does everything. It is all destiny. If I am destined by my Karma to be like this or like that, why then should I exert? It is my destiny only." This is fatalism. This will bring inertia, stagnation and misery. This is perfect misunderstanding of the laws of Karma. This is a fallacious argument. An intelligent man will certainly

not put such a question. You have made your own destiny from within by your thoughts and actions. You have a free will to choose now. You have Swatantrata in action. A rogue is not an eternal rogue. Put him in the company of a saint. He will change in no time. He will think and act now in a different way and will change his destiny. He will become saintly in character. Dacoit Ratnagar was changed into Sage Valmiki by the current of Rishi Narada. Jagai and Madai, two rogues of the first order were changed by the current of Nityananda, disciple of Lord Gouranga. You will have to desire, to think, and act only. You can change Karma in any way you like. You can become a Yogi or Jnani by right desire, by right thinking and by right action. You can attain the position of Indra or Brahma by good Karma. Man is not a helpless being. He has a free will of his own.

Man sows an action or thought and reaps a habit of doing or thinking. He sows a habit and reaps a character. He sows a character and reaps a destiny. Habit is second nature or rather first nature itself. Man has made his own destiny by thinking and acting. He can change his destiny. He is the master of his own destiny. There is no doubt of this. By right thinking and Vichara and strong Purushartha he can become master of his destiny. Markandeya changed his destiny though Tapas and worship of Lord Siva. Viswamitra became a Brahmarshi though vigorous

Tapas and changed his destiny. You can also do so, if you have strong will and iron determination. Vasishthaji preaches Purushartha to Sri Rama in Yoga Vasishtha. Savitri changed the destiny of her husband Satyavan through the power of her Pativrata Dharma. Just as you can change your way of writing from a slant style to a vertical style, so also you can change your destiny by changing your mode of thinking. Now you are thinking: "I am Mr. So and So," by identifying yourself with the body and other Upadhis or limiting adjuncts. Now start the anti-current. Think: "I am Brahman. I am the immortal Self in all. I am all-pervading light, intelligence or pure consciousness." Your destiny will be changed. Just as you think, so you will become. This is the Sadhana. This is the Ahamgraha-Upasana. Practise it steadily. Feel and realize.

An advocate of Lahore once asked me: "Swamiji, you say that the law of Karma operates with unerring precision in all men. A man desires, thinks and acts. If the actions that I perform now are the outcome of my past thoughts, and if my past thoughts are the resultant of my desires of the still distant past, am I not helplessly bound? I am like a piece of straw tossed about hither and thither. I must act in accordance with my thought. I must think in accordance with my desire. There is no hope for my freedom of action and thinking. This does not appeal to my reason at all. Kindly throw light on this important

subject."

I replied: "Look here, Mr. Dowlatram! Man is gaining new experiences and new knowledge everyday. Mind is evolving every second. There is every possibility for him to change his desires, thoughts and actions. Suppose there is a thief and he does pilfering. He removes the things of other people without their knowledge and it put into jail. People hate him. He gains many experiences. He always feels he is very miserable. He now decides to give up pilfering. He changes his desires. He now wants to lead an honest life. His old Samskaras, his old thoughts try to resist and recur again and again. But through resolute efforts he can change his thoughts, desires and actions and can become a very good charitable man and attain perfection, freedom and immortality."

Gleanings

1. Mark the words of the Yoga Vasishtha in this connection:—

"There is nothing like destiny other than the effect of our previous efforts (II-6-4). Our previous efforts are called our destiny (II-6-36). Our achievements are determined by our efforts. Our effort is therefore our destiny (II-6-2). Our previous and present efforts, in case they are in contrary directions, are the two rams fighting against each other. The more

powerful of the two always overthrows the other (II-6-10). Whether they are the past or the present efforts, it is the stronger ones that determine our destiny. In either case, it is man's own effort that determines his destiny by virtue of its strength (11-6-8). Man determines his own destiny by his thought. He can make those things also happen which were not destined to happen (V-24-28). The soul of man is powerful enough. Only those things happen in this world which it creates by its own free efforts, and not others (V-24-35-36). One should therefore overcome one's unfavourable destiny (the effect of one's past efforts) by greater effort in the present, gnawing his teeth (II-5-11). There is nothing in the world which cannot be achieved by man by right sort of efforts." (III-96-8).

2. "Destiny is simply the limitation imposed by an already exercised freedom of choice, or what is commonly called free will." (Kingsland : *Rational Mysticism*, p.353).

3. "The past can never be cancelled though it may be utilised. We have a good deal of the present constraint and previous necessity in human life. But necessity is not to be mistaken for destiny which we can neither defy nor delude. Though the self is not free from the bonds of determination, it can subjugate the past to a certain extent and turn it into a new course. Choice is the assertion of freedom

over necessity by which it converts necessity to its own use and thus frees itself from it. The human agent is free—he is not the plaything of fate or driftwood on the tide of uncontrolled events. He can actively mould the future instead of passively suffering the past. The past may become an opportunity or an obstacle. Everything depends on what we make of it and not what it makes of us." (Prof. S. Radhakrishnan: *An Idealist View of Life*, p.279).

6. FREE WILL VERSUS FATALISM

The controversy between free will and fatalism is still going on in the West and no one has come to any definite conclusion. It is a great pity that the doctrine of Karma is mistaken for fatalism. Fatalism is the doctrine that all events are subject to fate and happen by unavoidable necessity.

Fate is otherwise known as luck or fortune. That undefinable mysterious something which brings trials, successes and failures to man, which shapes and moulds him by teaching lessons of various sort, which takes care of him like a mother, which brings various sort of experiences, which brings cloudy days and days of bright sunshine, which raises a beggar to the level of a landlord and hurls down a mighty potentate to the level of a street-beggar, which gives different kinds of fruits and experiences to two people of equal talents and capacities, which made Napolean at one

time a terror in the eyes of the people and at another time a prisoner, and which makes a certain portion of the life of a man quite stormy and another portion quite smooth, is called fate. Fate educates and instructs man. However whimsical the fate may appear to operate, it works in harmony with the law of causation.

Fate is one's own creation. Man acts and thinks and develops his own character. He creates a web like the spider or a sillk-worm and entangles himself in its meshes on account of the three knots, viz., Avidya, Kama and Karma. He himself has enthroned fate to the level of a king and obeys its order owing to his ignorance and its effects.

The doctrine of Karma is diametrically opposed to the doctrine of fatalism. Fatalism causes inertia, lethargy, weakness of will and bondage. Fatalism annihilates faith. It induces terrible fear in the people. It destroys ethics. It checks growth and evolution, whereas the doctrine of Karma is an incentive to action to better one's condition. It is a source of solace. It gives man an assurance of a broader and happier life. It pre-supposes freedom of the will. Freedom is the essence of Karma. It gives opportunities for growth and evolution. The doctrine of Karma affords a most rational and scientific explanation of what is called fate. It gives a positive definite word of assurance that, although the present of which he himself is the creator or the

author, is unalterable and irrevocable, he may better his future by changing his thoughts, habits, tendencies and mode of action. Herein lies great comfort, strength, encouragement and consolation to the desperate man. Herein lies a strong impetus for the man to struggle and exert for improving himself. Even a forlorn and helpless man is made cheerful when he understands this doctrine of Karma. The doctrine of Karma brings hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless, joy to the cheerless and new strength to the weak. It braces up a sunken man. It is an ideal "pick-me-up" for the depressed and gloomy. The doctrine of Karma teaches: "Do not blame anybody when you suffer. Do not accuse God. Blame yourself first. You will have to reap what you have sown in your previous birth. Your present sufferings are due to your own bad Karma in your past life. *You are yourself the author of the present state.* The present in unchangeable. Do not weep. Do not cry over spilt milk. There is no use. You will not gain anything by so doing. Instead of weeping over the failure of crops during last year, go on ploughing this year. You will get abundant rain this year and rich harvest. Do virtuous actions now. Think rightly. Act rightly. You will have a brilliant and a glorious future." How beautiful and soul-stirring is this magnanimous doctrine of Karma! The doctrine of Karma develops faith and supports .ethics. It says "It you hurt another man, you hurt yourself."

Every act produces in the performer a double effect, one in the inner nature in the form of a tendency, good or bad, and the other in the form of fruit, reward or punishment. The past Karma influences the present life in two ways, first in the form of character or tendency internally and as fate externally. If you do an action, it creates a Samskara or subtle impression in the subconscious mind or Chitta. The Samskara causes a tendency. Tendency develops into a habit by repetition of the actions. The habit manifests as character. Character develops into destiny. This is the order: Samskara, tendency, habit, character, and destiny.

The faculty of choosing is termed will. This will is free by its own nature. Man has a free will by his birthright. It asserts itself at every moment of our lives. Bear in mind that every small act that you perform is the resultant of triple cojoint forces, viz., free-will, character and fate. The sphere of activity varies according to the nature of your Karma and the character formed by it. If you have done virtuous actions in your previous birth and if you have developed an examplary character, your will will have a wider field of activity and vice versa.

Determinism is the doctrine that all things, including the will, are determined (limited) by causes. This is the converse of free will. It is otherwise known as necessitarianism. Man has power to choos between the alternatives which fate brings befo

him. In choosing between them he may either follow his tendencies produced by his past actions or struggle against them. The will of a man is ever free. The arguments which are advanced by determinists in saying that human will is determined are not sound and tenable; they fall to the ground.

Dear friends! Man is the master of his destiny. Wake up now from the deep slumber of ignorance. Never become a fatalist. Think rightly. Act rightly. Lead a virtuous life. Never hurt the feelings of others. Mould your character. Purify your mind. Concentrate. Thou art Nitya Mukta Purusha. *Tat Twam Asi*—Thou art That.

Chapter Five

KARMA AND REINCARNATION

1. KARMA

Sri R. Krishnaswami Aiyer, M.A., B.L., writes about Karma in the *Hindu Mind* dated October, 1935:

a. Karmas Classified

Karmas are good, bad or mixed. The results of good Karmas are:

(1) Purification of the mind, that is to say, the removal from the mind of its drossness which is the effect of thoughts of narrow selfishness and gross sensuality.

(2) Happiness in the higher regions, during the period between the death and rebirth in this physical world. If the Karma is of an exceptional nature, the thinker may even be made an office-bearer with an authority in such higher regions.

(3) Coming back, as man again, to earth-life with facilities for further purification of mind. If the Karma, however, is done without attachment to its fruits and the thinker has been going along the path of Jnana (knowledge) or along the higher regions of the path of Bhakti (devotion to the suprem

universal Soul) having his mind completely purified and possessing faith in the revealed truth that he and the Divine Object of his devotion are in fact one in the self, he is not bound to return again to earth-life.

The results of bad Karmas are:

(1) The mind becomes more and more impure.

(2) Suffering in the nether region or hell during the period between the death and rebirth here.

(3) If the Karma is very bad, after suffering in the nether region, the thinker is made to take his birth in this world in the lower animal or vegetable kingdom as part of his punishment. In some cases these lower births immediately follow the previous earth-life.

(4) After undergoing his sufferings in hell or as a sub-human Jiva, the thinker comes again to assume a human body. He is then placed amidst very unfavourable environments to his progress onwards. These bad environments or impediments to advancement are in consequence of his own previous errors and misdoings.

Mixed Karmas are partly bad and its results are:

(1) The mind becomes pure in certain respects and more impure in certain others.

(2) The thinker suffers for some time in hell, and enjoys for some time in the happy regions [illegible]

(3) Afterwards he ordinarily takes birth here again as man.

b. The Western Theory of Evolution is Unsound.

Thus *evolution* and *involution* can be, strictly speaking, potulated only of the thinker. While so, some of the Western philosophers propound a theory that there is gradual progress from the mineral condition to the vegetable, from the vegetable to the animal, and from the animal to the human, and call it the theory of evolution. In the first place no religion of the world supports such a theory, and, as Benjamin Kidd in his *Social Evolution* says: "The tendency of the doctrine of evolution has been generally considered to be on the whole anti-religious." They say that evolution is going on in the universe; but what it is that is evolving they have nothing to say about. They observe different natures, bodies and objects in the universe occupying different positions in some respects and seeing that one is more 'advanced' than another, they make regular scales noting the different degrees of advancement. But they do not say that what is now found in the more advanced state of being must, in its essence, have been in existence formerly and must have been then in a less advanced condition. In other words, they do not say that the underlying entity which bears a more advanced form or exhibits a higher state or condition today is the same that formerly appeared

in a coarser garb or functioned in a lower kind of existence. In fact, they have in general ignored the necessity, nay, even the possibility, of the continuing presence of the subsisting reality and have only directed attention to some stations on the road of evolution without caring to know whether there is anyone journeying along the road, and, if so, who he is and how he is going on.

In fact no evolution is possible from the stage of the mineral to that of the vegetable, for there is nothing in the mineral that can evolve. Dr Bose's discoveries of the modern day can have reference only to the Ishwaric life, not the life of any Jiva in the mineral. The whole mineral kingdom has emerged out of the Tamasic aspect of Maya and it forms the material which goes to make the bodies of the Jivas and their means and places of support; mineral matter not composing the body of any Jiva is called 'inanimate' or 'inorganic', not because there is no life at all in it—for it has its very existence in the life of Ishwara—but because there is no separate co-ordinating life-principle connecting together the several atoms in harmonious co-operation for serving some common end. It is the presence or the absence of such a separate connecting life that makes, in fact, all the difference between the organic and the inorganic sides of Nature. The view that is now and then expressed from the modern Theosophical platform: 'every grain of sand has its Jivatma' is clearly

wrong and opposed to the clear statement in the holy books that the Jivas are to be found only in four classes of bodies, viz., Jarayuja, Andaja, Svedaja and Udbhijja.

Again, as regards the alleged evolution from the vegetable to animal and from the animal to the human, the Western evolutionists do not actually trace the passage of any entity from a lower to a higher state of being. They are only able to see that one being is more 'advanced' than another and that this universe is inhabited by beings of manifold gradation of advancement, physical and mental. They mentally arrange the beings under different groups and these groups as well as the beings placed in each of these groups are then arranged according to a regular and graduated scale of advancement. They then perceive that the ladder of advancement created by them in their imagination presents a really beautiful appearance and they infer that Nature, beautiful as She is, must have brought about the advancement of beings only in the order in which the rungs of the ladder appear. A big library may contain a large number of books of different gradations of thought or size. They may be arranged in some regular order. Will it be proper to infer that a book written by an advanced author has 'evolved' out of a book written by an ordinary man, or that a big volume has come out of a small booklet? The present-day theory of evolution has no strong foundation.

c. Who Evolves?

Further, what is the cause of growth or evolution? Why should an entity which was sometime ago in the vegetable state now appear in an animal body? Is its advancement or promotion to a higher state of being only accidental? If not, in what way did it merit the promotion? Is the vegetable capable of doing any responsible act or Karma for which it is rewarded? If it is itself not capable of doing any, is its ascent in evolution compulsory and due to the act of another agent? If so, does it mean that the fruits of action may go to one who did nothing to merit them? Among the lower animals themselves one is found happier throughout its life-span, from the moment of its birth, than another? Why should it be so? The differences in the animal's experience of pain and pleasure must have their own causes. What are they? The causes must relate to the previous existence of every such Jiva in question. This previous life could not have been that of a lower animal, for lower animals can do no responsible Karma. The law of Karma and justice, if it is true at all, shows unmistakably that there is no real foundation for the notion that there is evolution going on below the stage of man. Every brute, every little insect and every one of the plants and trees, all were, and are going to be again human beings themselves. They are all temporarily only suspended from the class of

humanity for some offences.

It may be asked, if all non-human states of being are only the results of the previous human Karma, in the beginning stage of the universe, there must have been only men and nothing else; is there any authority to show that there was a time when there were men alone and that the non-human states of being appeared only later on? The question assumes that there was a beginning for the universe. It may be that every Kalpa or Cycle of the universe has a beginning; but at the beginning of a Kalpa the universe takes the appearance in the condition in which it was just before the Pralaya or dissolution that preceded the Kalpa in question. The universe, with this alternate existence of Kalpa and Pralaya has had no beginning at all. None can say that there was a beginning for the existence of the power of Maya in the Self. As there was no beginning for the universe, there could not have been any period of time when there were men alone. At all times there have been human as well as non-human states of being in the manifested universe.

d. True Evolution

What then is true evolution? It is, as once before stated, the progress of the thinker in man from his present condition of limitedness to the state of the unlimited Self. Progress of the thinker means im-

provement and growth of mind through which he thinks. In the physical plane, all vegetable and animal bodies develop out of the life-germ, the unit cell. The embryonic cell sometimes divides itself into two or more cells and sometimes, as in the case of the lower forms of life, becomes associated with new cells drawn from outside. In any case, development of the embryo implies multiplication of the cells. Mere multiplication of the cells again cannot make a living body. Along with it, there is also the widening or expansion of the life within so as to control all the cells together. Similarly, a man's mind is said to grow or expand when his thoughts extend beyond his physical body and beyond his limited personality. As the original unit cell is the earliest and lowest state of the physical body, thoughts of one's own interests alone belong to the lowest stage of the mind. The mind grows when the interests of others are also considered, as the physical body grows up packing together more cells. As there is connecting life for all the cells together, selfless thoughts or thoughts of others' interests should be bound up together by a connecting and unifying knowledge that all are only the Self. The end of the evolution of the thinker is reached when the evolving mental life becomes, by expansion, identical with the all-including life, the universal Self. If, however, his thoughts and actions are directed exclusively towards personal and selfish ends, his mind contracts [illegible]

and more and recedes still further from the path of evolution. He should therefore think only such thoughts and do only such actions as may widen his mind and raise him up in evolution. The mind has to expand and expand until the limiting mind-covering, becoming very thin, is torn asunder when, the limitations of the thinker ceasing to exist any longer, his inner Self shines in his infinitude of existence, consciousness and bliss, for it was only *he*, the only *one* and the *real Self* that was appearing till then as enclosed in a covering made of mind-stuff.

2. DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION

The doctrine of reincarnation is accepted by the majority of mankind of the present day. It has been held as true by the mightiest Eastern nations. The ancient civilization of Egypt was built upon this doctrine, and it was handed over to Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Virgil and Ovid who scattered it through Greece and Italy. It is the keynote of Plato's philosophy when he says that all knowledge is reminiscence. It was wholly adopted by the Neo-Platonists like Plotinus and Proclas. The hundreds of millions of Hindus, Buddhists and Jains have made this doctrine the foundation of their philosophy, religion, government and social institutions. It was a cardinal point in the religion of the Persian Unagi. The doctrine of metempsychosis was an essential prin-

ciple of the Druid faith and was impressed upon the Celts, the Gauls and the Britons. Among the Arab philosophers it was a favourite idea. The rights and ceremonies of the Romans, Druids and Hebrews expressed this faith forcibly. The Jews adopted it after the Babylonian captivity. John the Baptist was to them a second Elijah. Jesus was thought to be a reappearance of John the Baptist or one of the old prophets. The Roman Catholic purgatory seems to be *a makeshift, contrived to take its place.* Philosophers like Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer have upheld this doctrine. Theologians like Julius Muller, Dorner and Edward Beecher have maintained it. And today it reigns over the Burmese, Siamese, Chinese, Japanese, Tartar, Tibetan, East Indian and Ceylonese, including at least 750 millions of mankind or nearly two thirds of the human race Is it not wonderful then that this great and grand philosophical education which the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains gave to the world centuries and centuries before the Christian era should or could be blotted out of existence from the Western and European world by the soul-blighting and absurd dogmas of the dark ages that supervened? By the persecution of the wise men and destruction of innumerable works in the library of Constantinople, the Church hierarchy managed to plunge the whole of Europe into mental darkness which has given the world the black record of the inquisition and the loss of millions of human lives

through religious wars and persecutions.

Here is a challenge to the non-believers of the Hindu theory of transmigration. Recently a little girl Santi Devi gave a vivid description of her past lives in Delhi. There was a great sensation in Delhi and Muttra, nay, throughout the United Provinces. There was a great assembly of persons to hear her statements. She recognised her husband and child of her previous birth who are living in Muttra. She pointed out the place where money was kept, and an old well in the house which is covered now. All her statements were duly verified and corroborated by respectable eye-witnesses. Several cases like this have occurred in Rangoon, Sitapur and various other places. They are quite common now. In such cases the Jiva takes immediate rebirth with the old astral body or Linga Sarira. That is the reason why memory of previous birth comes in. He did not stay in the mental world for a long time to rebuild a new mind and astral body according to his previous experiences of the world.

Transmigration made its appearance in the early Christian church. Elijah was reborn as John the Baptist. "Did the blind man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?" ask the believers in transmitted retribution. There is a period of anxiety immediately after death, when angels contend with demons for the possession of the departing soul on its way to purgatory.

Pythagoras and others obtained their belief in metempsychosis from India only. Pythagoras who flourished in the sixth century also taught a doctrine of transmigration; and, curiously enough, prescribed abstinence from the eating of flesh.

The suckling of a child and the act of swimming of a duckling—these instinctive acts are proofs of memory which must be the result of their corresponding and inseparable impressions left by the same acts in a previous incarnation, never mind when and where. Every act leaves Samskaras in the Chitta, which causes memory. Memory in its own turn leads to fresh actions and fresh impressions. This cycle or Chakrika goes on from eternity like the analogy of the seed and tree.

There is no beginning for them, the desire to live being eternal, 'for them', *i.e.,* for the desires. Desires have no beginning or end, every being has clinging to this physical life (Abhinivesa). This "will to live" is eternal. Experiences are also without beginning. You cannot think of a time when this feeling of 'Aham' or 'I' has not existed. This 'I' exists continuously without interruption. From this we can very easily infer that there have been previous births for us.

Now, could there be fear of death to avoid pain in any being who has only been born, if he has had no experience of liability to death, it being understood that desire to avoid anything is only caused by

remembrance suffered in consequence thereof? Nothing which is inherent in anything stands in need of a cause. How could it be that a child, who has not experienced this liability to death in the present life, should, as he is falling down from the mother's lap, begin to tremble and hold with his hands tightly the necklace hanging on her breast? How is it that such a child should experience the fear of death, which can only be caused by the memory of the pain consequent upon aversion to death, whose existence is conferred by the trembling of the child?

We have boy-geniuses. A boy of five becomes an expert on the piano or violin. Sri Jnanadev wrote his commentary "Jnaneshwari" on the Gita when he was fourteen years old. There have been boy-mathematicians. There was the boy-Bhagavatar in Madras who conducted Kathas when he was eight years old. How could you explain these strange phenomena? They are not freaks of nature. The theory of transmigration only could explain all these things. If one man gets deep grooves in his mind by learning music or mathematics in this birth, he carries these impressions to the next birth and becomes a prodigy in these sciences even when he is a boy.

According to the Christian faith, the ultimate fate of the righteous is life eternal; of the evil, everlasting fire or eternal damnation. How could this be? No opportunity is afforded to the sinner to purify himself in later births.

The doctrine of reincarnation is common to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. What is reincarnation? Reincarnation is the doctrine that the soul enters this life not as fresh creation, but after a long course of previous existences, and will have to pass through many more before it reaches its final destination. What possible motion in the brain causes the idea 'I am I'? This recognition of a real unit does not vary from the cradle to the grave. From childhood to old age, during the whole course of the total change of all brain-molecules the idea 'I am I' is undisturbed. This 'I am I' is the soul. It is this soul which makes memory possible. It has its own consciousness and not the consciousness of anyone else, therefore it is a unit existing by itself. The law of the conservation of energy is true in the physical as well as in the spiritual world. Therefore, as no atom can be created or destroyed, so also no soul-entity can be created or destroyed. What becomes of the soul then after what we call death? No powers in the universe can annihilate it.

Reincarnation is the only doctrine which gives a complete solution to the much disputed question of original sin. There cannot be greater injustice in the world than the fact that I am now suffering for the transgression of my ancestor. Adonis responsibility for our sin is only a makeshift of the theologians. No one but the individual himself can be blamed for his wrong doing. Are not the courts of law of the United

States founded on the ideas of justice? Will any judge sitting on the throne of justice be justified in accepting the death—the voluntary suicide of Mr. B—as the proper retribution for the murder committed by Mr. A? And if he does that, will not the same judge be arraigned before a superior court having knowingly abetted the suicide of B? And still we are asked to believe that the guilt of one man can be washed by the suffering of another.

But the doctrine of reincarnation assists most when we look at the inequality and injustice and evil in the world and seek the solution. Why is one man born rich and another poor? Why is one man born in Central Africa among the cannibals and the other in a peaceful part of India? Why is Queen Victoria born to rule over the territories on which the sun never sets and why is a labourer in Burma to work as a slave in an Englishman's tea-garden. What is the cause of this apparent injustice? Even those who have belief in the personal creator of the universe must believe in this doctrine of reincarnation in order to exonerate God from the charge of maliciousness.

Even in the New Testament there is sufficient evidence for reincarnation. In St. John IX-2 a question is put to Jesus by his disciples: Which did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind? This refers to two popular theories of the time—one, that of Moses who taught that the sins of fathers would descend on children to the third and the fourth

generation, and the other that of the doctrine of reincarnation. Jesus merely says that neither the man's sin nor his father's sin was the cause of his blindness; he does not deny the pre-existence of that man. Lord Jesus also means that John reincarnated as Elijah.

But people may ask that if this doctrine is true, how is it that we do not remember our past incarnations. I will ask such people in what way do we exercise the faculty of memory. Certainly, so long as we are living in a body we exercise it through the brain. In passing from one incarnation to the other, the soul does not carry its former brain in the new body. Even during the course of one life, do we always remember our past doings? Can anyone remember that wonderful epoch, the infancy?

If you have knowledge of the Raja Yogic technique of perceiving the impressions directly through the process of Samyama (Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi at one time), you can remember your past lives. In Raja Yoga philosophy of Patanjali Maharishi, you will find:

Samskarat Sakshat Karanat Purvajati Jnaanam.

"By perceiving the impressions, comes the knowledge of past life."

All experiences that you have had in various births remain in the form of impressions or residual potencies in the Chitta or subconscious mind. They remain

in a very, very subtle form, just as sound remains in a subtle form in a gramophone record. These subtle impressions assume the forms of waves and you get memory of past experiences. Therefore, if a Yogi can make a Samyama on these past experiences in the Chitta, he can remember all the details of all his past lives.

Reincarnation is Quite True

Man can hardly attain perfection in one life. He has to develop his heart, intellect and hand. He has to mould his character in a perfect manner. He has to develop various virtuous qualities such as mercy, tolerance, love, forgiveness, equal vision, courage, etc. He has to learn many lessons and experiences in this great world-school. Therefore he has to take many lives. Reincarnation is very true. One small life is a part of the long series that stretches behind you and in front of you. It is quite insignificant. One gains a little experience only. He evolves very little. During the course of one life man does many evil actions. He does very few good actions. Very few die as good men. Christians believe that one life determines and settles everything. How could this be? How can the everlasting future of man be made to depend on that one small, little, insignificant life? If in that life he believes in Christ, he will get eternal peace in heaven; if he is an unbeliever in that life,

he will get eternal damnation, he will be thrown forever into the lake of fire or into a horrible hell. Is this not the most irrational doctrine? Should he not get his chances for correction and improvement? The doctrine of reincarnation is quite rational. It gives ample chances for man's rectification, upheaval and gradual evolution.

3. LAWFUL AND FORBIDDEN ACTIONS
(Vidhi-Nishedha)

Actions are of two kinds:—

1. Lawful (Vidhi).
2. Forbidden or prohibitory (Nishedha).

Lawful actions are the injunctions of the Sastras. They are beneficial to the performer. *Satyam vada, Dharmam chara*—speak the truth, do virtuous actions." These are lawful actions. They are best calculated to purify the heart of the performer and to prepare his mind for the reception of Brahma Jnana.

Forbidden are those actions which are interdicted by the scriptures, such as: "Do not drink liquor. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal, etc." They are harmful. They hurl the doer down to lower births.

The lawful actions are of four kinds:

1. *Nitya Karmas*—daily rites.
2. Naimittika Karmas—occasional rites.

3. Kamya Karmas—optional rites.
4. Prayaschitta Karmas—penances.

Morning bath and Sandhya in the three periods of time constitute Nitya Karmas. If you do not perform them daily you incur sin. You are subject to Pratyavaya Dosha (the sin of omission). The rites done during eclipse and Shraddha (ceremony) every year are Naimittaka Karmas. Non-performance of these rites brings sin. That man who is struggling to obtain Moksha will not be affected by the harmful effects of leaving the Nitya and Naimittaka Karmas. Kamya Karmas are performed with a motive of obtaining definite results. Sacrifices that are done for getting rain, and the offerings to fire for obtaining Swarga, are examples of Kamya Karmas.

Prayaschitta is done for the destruction of sin. In the Code of Manu you will find various kinds of Prayaschitta for the destruction of various kinds of sins, such as the murder of a Brahmin, killing of a cow, drinking alcohol or taking forbidden foods, adultery, etc. Prayaschitta is of two kinds, viz., 1. Extraordinary (Asadharana) and 2. Ordinary (Sadharana). Extraordinary penances are those which are prescribed in the Code of Manu for the destruction of particular sins. Chandrayana Vrita, Krichhra Vrita and various other kinds such as carrying a skull in the hand and living on alms after renouncing all property, living underneath a tree, long pilgrimage till the end of one's life, and openly admitting before

joyment in one single birth, that portion of the Karma which has not begun to bear fruit. Hence the certainty of subsequent embodied existence on account of the unenjoyed portion of the Karma.

The observance of obligatory Karma has not got the power of rendering inoperative good and bad deeds, which have not begun to bear fruit. There is a penalty if you do not perform obligatory Karma. There will be Pratyavaya Dosha (unpleasant consequences). It therefore follows that the observance of obligatory Karma only has the effect of warding off misery, the certain consequence arising from its non-performance, and has not the effect of consuming previous Karma which is yet to bear fruit. Obligatory Karma diminishes the sins stored in previous births.

4. THREE KINDS OF KARMA

Sánchita Karmas are accumulated works; Prarabdha Karmas are ripe or fructuous actions; Kriyamana or Agami Karmas are current works. Sanchita are destroyed by Brahma Jnana. One should enjoy the Prarabdha anyhow (Vyavaharika Drishti). Kriyamana are no actions, as the Jnani has Akarta and Sakshi Bhav. Tarash, the case in which arrows are accumulated, represents our Sanchita Karmas; the arrow that is ready for discharging represents our Agami Karmas; and the arrow which has already left the bow, which cannot return, which must hit the

target, represents the Prarabdha Karmas. The articles in the store-room represent the Sanchita; the articles that are put in the shop for sale are Prarabdha; the daily sale proceeds are the Agami.

There are three kinds of Prarabdha, viz., Iccha Prarabdha, Aniccha Prarabdha, and Paraiccha Prarabdha. There is difference between the Iccha Prarabdha of Vivekins and non-Vivekins. Non-Vivekins think that they are the agents of all actions. They are egoistic. They do mischief to other people. They always do evil actions. They are always full of misery. Vivekins eradicate attachment, desires and egoism. They have no desire for money. They lead a peaceful life and serve others.

Aniccha Prarabdha is common to Vivekins and non-Vivekins. Both suffer from the heat of the sun, wind, rain, disease, accidental injury to the head by striking against the door, lightning-stroke, etc. Paraiccha Prarabdha is common to both. One man prostrates before a Vivekin or a non-Vivekin and implores him to render some help or service. He has to undergo the pleasure and pain that accrue from this work.

The seed-like subtle impressions of the entire accumulated actions lie dormant in Chittakasa (the mental space). When a great Jnani gets illumination through direct intuitive knowledge, that he is not the five sheaths but transcendental to them and also their witnessing intelligence (Sakshi), the Atman,

then the subtle impressions of Sanchita Karma lying in Chittakasa of the Manomaya Kosha remain in the sheath only; they can no longer enchain the liberated Jnani.

Just as a potter, having set in motion the wheel by a rod, removes his hand and rod from it, allowing the wheel to revolve till the momentum previously imparted to it is exhausted, in the same way, the Jnani, even after his attainment of Jivanmukti through self-knowledge, continues enjoying the fruit of his Prarabdha Karma up to the end of the present body. Prarabdha is exhausted by no other means than by enjoying its fruit.

Just as the potter's wheel, after being set in motion continues revolving, even after the connection with the potter is cut off, so also a Jnani continues to enjoy the fruit of his Prarabdha Karma; but they cannot produce the seed of Sanchita Karma on account of his non-attachment or absence of craving for them.

The enjoyment of the fruit of Prarabdha Karma falls to his lot by the force of Prarabdha. He has not the least desire for them as he has realized, through self-knowledge, their impermanent and unreal nature. So their enjoyment does not in any way affect him. The experience of happiness and misery, owing to his non-attachment, is impotent to produce the seeds of Sanchita Karma, as the parched grains are impotent to germinate and produce any crop.

Brahma Jnana annihilates Agami Karmas (current works) of a Jnani as he has no contact with them, that is, he is untouched or unaffected by his Karmas, like the lotus leaf which is unaffected by the drops of water on it.

The accumulated and current actions of a Jnani take shelter in Brahmanda Prakriti.

Those who serve and adore a Jnani acquire his merit of current actions, while those who hate and censure him get the demerit of his current actions.

Thus the Jnani gets disentangled from the fetters of all Karmas (Tattwa Bodha).

5. SIN IS A MISTAKE ONLY

The ignorant man only says: "I am a great sinner." This is a serious mistake. Never for a moment think that you are a sinner. You are the most holy one, you are the ever-pure Atman. Sin cannot touch you. You are above vice and virtue, Dharma and Adharma. Punya and Papa are mental creations only. Sins are mistakes only. An ignorant Jiva commits these mistakes during the course of his journey in this world on account of Avidya or ignorance. Through mistakes he gains experiences and marches forward in his path of spirituality. Every mistake is your best teacher. One has to evolve through sins and mistakes. These mistakes are inevitable. Some people become a prey to thoughts of sin. They ever brood: "We are great

and unhappy world, do thou worship Me. Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice unto Me, bow down to Me, having thus united thy whole self in Me, taking Me as the supreme goal, thou shalt come to Me." Ch. IX-30-34.

6. SECRETS OF KARMA

Karma is the sum-total of works—good, bad and mixed—which an individual performs during his life. It is the collective totality of man's actions. It is these actions that determine his future existence. There is double retribution or reward for man's virtuous actions. He gets a good birth with suitable surroundings, environments and opportunities for his good actions: this is one reward. Another reward is that he gets a place in the abode of heaven also. But after the consummation of happiness he is sure to be hurled back to this physical plane. Lord Krishna says in the Gita:

"They, having enjoyed the spacious heaven world, their holiness withered, come back to this world of death. Following the virtues enjoined by the *three* (Vedas) and desiring objects of desires, they attain to the state of coming and going."

It is very difficult to say what Karma brings forth a particular disease. Is it a single Karma or a combination of several Karmas that brings epilepsy? The sages declare that the theft of a golden necklace brings Scrofula in the neck in the next birth. They say that

leprosy, epilepsy and gulma (chronic gastric catarrh) are due to very bad Karmas. It is also difficult to say whether this body is the resultant product of a single Karma or a mixture of several Karmas. Generally one strong and powerful Karma determines the birth of an individual and keeps up the current of life of that particular birth. Some minor Karmas may be joined to the main trunk or the central thread. Learned persons say that one will have to take several births sometimes to exhaust the fruits of one important virtuous Karma. The secret of Karma is very mysterious. God only knows them because He is the Law-giver. Sometimes highly virtuous and vicious Karmas bring forth their fruits in the very life itself.

It is impossible for a man to remain without doing any action either through the organs of action, feet, hand, etc., or through the mind. Even if he becomes a Sannyasin and ietires into the cave in the Himalayas he must continue eating, drinking, answering the calls of nature, sleeping, etc. That is the reason why the Lord says in the Gita: "Nor can anyone, even for an instant remain really actionless; for helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities born of nature." Ch. III-5.

If work ceases to produces rebirth, literally no one can be freed. To avoid this difficulty knowledge is credited with powers of destroying Karmas. The Gita says:

Jnanagnih sarvakarmani bhasmasatkurute.

"The fire of wisdom reduces all actions to ashes. Ch. IV-37.

To sum up in a nutshell: there are three kinds of Karmas, viz., the Sanchita or accumulated ones, the Prarabdha or the fructiferous, and the Agami or current actions. Sanchita are works which have been accumulated in several previous births; Prarabdha are those which have given the present life and have already started to bear fruit; and Agami are the works which are being done in this present life. They will bring fruits in a future life. The Sanchita and Agami are destroyed by getting Brahma Jnana or knowledge of the Self or God. But the Prarabdha can only be exhausted by experiencing their fruits in the present life. A child is born blind, deaf or dumb—this is due to Prarabdha. One man dies at the age of ninety, another at thirty-five and the third at eighteen: this is due to Prarabdha. Jati (caste), longevity of life, Bhoga (enjoyment), are all due to Prarabdha. A virtuous man suffers, he is starving. A scoundrel is in a prosperous condition An aged mother loses her only son who was her sole prop A young girl who was newly married loses her husband. Instances like these can be multiplied *ad infinitum*. In all these cases Prarabdha operates unerringly with scientific accuracy and precision.

See how Prarabdha operates. A lady from Paris came to me for an interview. She said that ever since

she landed in India she was quite at home in the country. India was very familiar to her. She liked India and Indians very much. Within three months she forgot all about her parents and native place. She liked the Indian way of dressing. So she changed her dress. She wanted to domicile in India for the practice of Yoga. This clearly shows that in her previous birth she was born in India. Another American lady lived in Lakshman Jhula near Rishikesh fifteen years ago. She lived on Bhiksha, led the life of an ascetic and died on the banks of the Ganges. This is all Prarabdha. Hindus say that wherever there is Anna-Jala (food and drink) for a man, there he will be dragged. You cannot remain in a place even for a second more, when the Anna-Jala is finished.

The last powerful thought that occupies the mind of a man in his dying moment determines the nature of his next birth. You will find in the Gita:

Yam yam vaapi smaran bhavam tyajatpante
Kalebaram tam tamevaiti Kaunteya sadaa tadbhavitah.

"Whosoever at the end abandoneth the body, thinking upon any being, to that being only he goeth, O Kaunteya, ever to that conformed by nature." Ch. VIII-6.

If the thought of tea comes in your mind at the moment of death, you may become a manager of a tea estate in the next birth, if you had done virtuous

actions, or you may be born to do hard labour in a tea estate if you had done any evil actions. A drunkard will have thoughts of liquor when he is dying. A licentious man will think of women only when he is about to expire. I saw a dying man who had the habit of using snuff. When he was in an unconscious state he used to move his fingers towards the nose every now and then and do imaginary snuffing. Obviously he had thoughts of snuff. A medical officer of a hospital used all sorts of abusive terms while he was in a dying condition. Raja Jada Bharata, out of compassion for a deer took great care of the animal. He gradually developed attachment. The one thought of the deer only occupied his mind when he was about to die. So he had to take the birth of a deer. In every Hindu home the Names of God, such as Hari Om, Ram, Ram Narayan and Krishna are whispered into the ear of the dying man. The idea is that the dying man may remember the Name and form of the Lord and thereby reach the blissful abode. If a man leads a virtuous life for many years, and if he does Japa and meditation for a long time, then only, through the force of habit he will remember God and His Name at the moment of death.

Hindu scriptures say that a man may become a Deva or a beast or a bird or vegetable or stone according to his merit or demerit. The Upanishads also corroborate this statement. Kapila also agrees on this point. But Buddhism and some W

philosophers teach: 'There is no more retrogression for a man when once he takes a human birth. There is no necessity for him to be born as an animal for the sake of demerit. He can be punished in a variety of ways in the human birth itself.' When a man takes the form of a Deva, all human Samskaras, habits and tendencies will remain dormant. When a man takes the form of a dog, the animal-tendencies, habits and Samskaras only will manifest. Human tendencies will remain suppressed. Some dogs get royal treatment in the palaces of kings. They move in cars, eat good food and sleep on cushions. These are all degenerated human beings.

After death this physical body, composed of five elements, is cast off like a slough or the coil of a snake. The inner astral body or Linga Sarira, which consists of nineteen Tattwas, viz., five Karma Indriyas, five Jnana Indriyas, five Pranas, mind, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara, goes to heaven, comes back to the physical plane, puts on another physical body and reincarnates. It is this body that contains the impressions of Karmas. This body remains till one gets knowledge of the Self and consequent emancipation. Then it disintegrates and the components get involved in the ocean of Tanmatras or Avyaktam.

Heaven and hell are mental creations only. It is the mind that makes a heaven of hell and a hell of heaven. They are Puranic concepts. For a Vedantin there is neither hell nor heaven. Who is to suffer?

The Atman is Akarta or Nishkriya. The Atman is all-pervading. It is ever free (Nitya Mukta).

Works are extinguished either by expiatory ceremonies (Prayaschitta) or by the knowledge of the Self or Brahman, or by the full fruition of their consequences.

Smritis declare that some single actions such as the murder of a Brahmin, are the causes of more than one new existence.

7. KARMA IN THE JAIN PHILOSOPHY

Karma in the Jain philosophy is divided into eight classes: those which act as an impediment to the knowledge of truth; those which act as an impediment to the right insight of various sorts; those which give one pleasure and pain; and those which produce bewilderment. The other four are again divided into other classes so minutely that a student of the Jain Karma philosophy can trace any effect to a particular Karma. Persons who by right faith, right knowledge, right conduct, destroy all Karmas and thus develop fully the nature of their soul, reach the highest perfection, become divine and are called Jainas. Those Jainas, who, in every stage, preach the law and establish the order, are called Tirthankaras.

Subject to the law of Karma man has to work out the effect of his previous actions. This Karma is a kind of force which holds the soul in bondage and

prevents it knowing itself fully. There are many varieties of this force. The bondage of Karma arises on account of tendencies, and the most predominent of these determine the type of the body which the soul would make for itself in its future incarnation. The sum-total of these tendencies is what is called character, and this character contains in itself the well-digested and assimilated experience of the entire past of the soul. Now, if we would analyse the idea of tendency, we would not fail to observe that it is the modification of the mind in particular ways. The Jain books teach that the Karmic force is the product of a kind of matter, the particles of which have become combined with the soul. This explains the nature of the force which prevents the soul from realizing its own blissful nature. It is obvious that all that the soul has to do is to get rid of the particles of matter which it has drawn to itself. As soon as this is accomplished the soul is freed from all kinds of bondage and acquires perfect knowledge and bliss.

Karma is an energy which an embodied being generates—be it vital, mental or moral— and which keeps him in the mundane world, the Samsara. Karma, in short, is the whole Samsaric make-up of an embodied being. It is perfectly divested of the idea of sacrifice. Karmas which keep the individual in a backward condition are known as Papa; those which help him in advancement are Punya. The Jain philosophy gives a detailed enumeration of Karmas,

and explains how they are attracted (Ashrava), how they are assimilated with the individual (Bandha), how their inflow can be stopped (Samvara), how they can be entirely worked out (Nirjara), and what the ultimate state of the perfected individual is (Moksha). This particular branch of philosophy, therefore, includes topics like sensations, perceptions, consciousness, pains and pleasures, moralities of life, moral depravities, building of the body and all factors of the individuality.

8. PURUSHARTHA VERSUS PRARABDHA

One philosopher says: "It is very difficult to say how Purushartha brings results and how it operates." Another philosopher says: "Everything is prearranged in the grand plan or grand scheme. God knows the whole details of evolution of a man from mineral life till he becomes a Jivanmukta or liberated soul. In reality all is Prarabdha only. We will have to preach Purushartha just to give an impetus to the man to work in right earnest. Otherwise he will become slothful and dull."

The man who advocates the theory of Purushartha says "Am I a straw to be tossed about hither and thither? I can change my Prarabdha. I will undo it by Vedantic practice. I have free will of my own. I will make it pure and irresistible. I will work out my salvation. I will become free myself." No one

can remain quiet even for a second. No one can become a fatalist. There is an urge or stimulus from within to work. That is the reason why the Gita says: "Nor can anyone even for an instant remain actionless; for helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities born of nature." The theory of Prarabdha cannot make anyone a fatalist. For a Bhakta it is all Prarabdha only; for he is a man of self-surrender. He has to glorify the power of the Lord. For a Vedantin it is all Purushartha only; for he is a man of self-reliance. He has to glorify the power of his own strong will (Atma Bala). Both are correct from their own view-points.

Prarabdha is only Purushartha of previous births. God and Purushartha are synonymous terms. They are two names for one thing. Trial or luck, Purushartha or Prarabdha, free will or necessity—all these are synonymous terms. If a man succeeds in his attempt he calls it Purushartha. He says: "I really exerted much. I have succeeded." If he fails the same man says: "What can I do, my friend? It is all Prarabdha. Without Him nothing can be done. Without God not an atom can move, no leaf can wave in the air." In the Mahabharata you will find that exertion and Prarabdha combined bring about fruits. If you are ailing, you must do Purushartha. You must take medicine. You should leave the results to Prarabdha.

Throughout the *Yoga Vasishtha,* Sri Vasishthaji

recommends Purushartha only to Sri Rama. Through Purushartha Markandaya conquered death. Man is doubtless the *master of his destiny. What is destiny* after all? It is one's own make-up. You have created certain things. You can destroy them or undo them also. *You are thinking in one way now:* "*I am Mr So* and So. I am a Brahmin. I am a doctor. I am stout. I am a householder." This is Prarabdha. You can *change this particular mode of thinking. Think:* "I am Brahman. I am omnipotent I am the witness or Sakshi. I am God. I am neither the body nor the *mind. I am the all-pervading Truth or pure con*sciousness." This is Purushartha.

9. CONDUCT

"According as he acts and according as he conducts himself, so will he be."—Bri Upanishad Conduct is *the cause of the quality of new birth.*

The Upanishads declare: "Those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain some good birth, *the birth of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or a Vaishya,* when the fruits of their good works have been all exhausted in the Chandraloka or the sphere of the *moon. But those whose conduct has been evil* will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a dog or hog.

In some places conduct is spoken of not as Puru*shartha but as Karmanga.* In this case it produces no separate result; what, if considered as Purushartha it has a special result of its own

Chapter Six

GARLAND OF KARMA YOGA

1. THE FOUR PATHS

UNION with God is the goal of this human life. It is the be-all and end-all of our existence. It is the *summum bonum* of life. This can be achieved by following the path of Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga or Karma Yoga.

Bhakti Yoga is the path of devotion or the path of affection that is suitable for people of devotional temperament, in whom the love-element preponderates. Women are fit for this Bhakti Yoga Marga as affection predominates in them. Raja Yoga is suited to men of mystic temperament. Some are fond of acquiring Siddhis (powers). They can take up this path. Jnana is the path of Vedanta. Men of rational temperament with reasoning power, strong individual thinking and bold reasoning can take up this path. Those who have an active temperament can follow the path of Karma Yoga.

Bhakti Yoga is suitable for the vast majority of devotees. Generally there is a mixture of devotional and intellectual temperaments in all men. Some are purely devotional. Some are purely intellectual. One can realize through selfless Karma Yoga also. Karma Yoga purifies the mind (Chitta Suddhi) and prepares

the aspirant for Jnana Yoga. People of active temperament should take up Karma Yoga. Bhakti is also classified as mental Karma. It comes under Karma Yoga. Raja Yoga is also a form of Bhakti Yoga. In Bhakti Yoga the devotee does absolute self-surrender to the Lord. A Raja Yogi has subtle egoism. The Bhakta depends upon the Lord. He is extremely humble. A Raja Yogi exerts and asserts. He is of Swatantra type (independent) Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga are not incompatibles like acid and alkali. One can combine one-pointed devotion with Jnana Yoga. The fruit of Bhakti Yoga is Jnana. Highest love (Para Bhakti) and Jnana are one. Perfect knowledge is love. Perfect love is knowledge.

Sri Sankara, a Kevala Adwaita Jnani, was a great Bhakta of Lord Hari, Hara and Devi Jnana Dev of Alandi, Poona, a great Yogi, was a Bhakta of Lord Krishna. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa worshipped Kali and got Jnana through Swami Totapuri, his Adwaita Guru. Lord Gouranga of Bengal was a great Adwaita Vedantic scholar and yet he danced in the streets and market-places singing the Names of Hari Appaya Dikshita, a famous Jnani of Adaiyapalam, North Arcot District, the author of *Siddhanta Lesha* and various other Vedantic books, was a devotee of Lord Siva

It behoves therefore that Bhakti can be combined with much advantage with Jnana Raja Yoga aims in controlling all thought-waves or mental modifica-

tions. The second Sutra in *Yoga Darshan* of Patanjali Maharishi in the first chapter reads:

Yogas Chitta Vritti Niradhah.

"Yoga is the restraint of mental modifications."

This is the definition of Raja Yoga according to Patanjali Maharishi. Sri Jnana Dev, Goraknath, Raja Bhartrihari and Sadasiva Brahman were all Raja Yogis of great repute and glory.

Bhakti is a means to the end. It gives purity of mind. It removes Vikshepa (tossing of the mind). Sakamya Bhakti (devotion with expectation) brings Swarga and Brahmaloka for the devotee (Uttamaloka Prapti). Nishkamya Bhakti (love without expectation of fruits) brings Chitta Suddhi and through the purity of the mind the aspirant gets Jnana.

2. LIVE UP TO YOUR IDEAL

You should have your own ideal in life and should try hard to accomplish the ideal. People vary in their capacities, mental and intellectual calibre, and in physical and mental strength to do things. Therefore, different people should have different ideals. Then only they can evolve quickly. Then alone they will realize sure and rapid progress. The ideal of one man will not suit another man. If one keeps an ideal that he cannot realize, an ideal that is beyond his reach and capacity, he will get disappointment. He will give

up his effort and become Tamasic.

You should have your own ideal. You may realize the ideal this moment or after ten years with faltering steps. It does not matter much how long it takes. Every man should endeavour his level best to live up to his ideal. He should put his whole energy, nerve-force and will in the realization of his ideal. You can chalk out your own ideal according to your own standard. If you are unable to do this, have your guide to do so, and he will select for you the ideal that is suitable to your capacity and standard.

One man may say: "I will teach the village boys and will give them free education. This is my ideal in life." Another may say. "I will serve sick people and nurse them carefully. I will join any Seva institution and render free service till the end of my life. Service of the sick is my ideal." A third man may say: "I will beg from door to door and start a Kshettar for feeding Sadhus and Sannyasins. This is my ideal." A fourth man may say: "My ideal is Self-realization. I will go to Gangotri and live in a cave and do intense meditation. This is my ideal." All are quite correct according to their capacity and standard. You must gradually bring the ideal to the realization of God or Brahman. The highest ideal is Self-realization. Service, worship, etc., eventually result in the realization of the inner Self. The ideal to have ethical perfection is just below the ideal of Self-realization. But this will lead to Self-realization.

Self-realization is the greatest ideal in life. It is the most difficult of all ideals to fulfil. One who attempts Self-realization does the best service to mankind.

One should not treat a man who has a low ideal, with contempt. He may be a baby-soul who is just crawling on the moral and spiritual path. Your duty is to help him in all possible ways in the realization or accomplishment of his ideal. You should give him all sorts of encouragement in his sincere endeavour to live up to his own highest ideal.

It is deplorable to note that the vast majority of persons have no ideal at all. Even educated persons do not cherish any ideal. They lead an aimless life and therefore drift hither and thither like a piece of straw. They make no progress in life. Is this not a very sad plight? Highly lamentable indeed! It is very difficult to get a human birth and yet people do not realize the importance of keeping up an ideal and living up to it. The ideal of 'eat, drink and be merry' is adopted by the Epicureans, the gluttons and rich people. This school of thought has countless followers and the number is increasing by leaps and bounds daily. This is the ideal of Virochana. This is the ideal of Asuras and Rakshasas. This ideal will lead a man to the darkest regions of misery and sorrow, the 'eternal lake of fire'. Blessed is the man who keeps up an ideal and struggles hard to live up to his own ideal, for he will soon attain God-consciousness. Glory unto sincere struggling souls!

3. KARMA NISHTHA

The seer of the Isavasya Upanishad prescribes in the first Sloka the method to enter into Jnana Nishtha. The meaning of the Sloka is: "All this, movable and immovable, is indwelt by the Lord. Renounce the names and forms. Renounce the sensual pleasures and enjoy the Atmic bliss. Do not covet anybody's wealth." This is the path of Nivritti Marga for Sannyasins. In the second Sloka he prescribes the Karma Nishtha for householders, who are not competent to follow the path of renunciation by taking Sannyasa.

Kurvanneveha karmani jijeevishechchatam samah
Evam tvayi nanyathetosti na karma lipyate nare.

"Should one wish to live a hundred years on this earth, he should live doing Karma While thus, as man you live, there is no way other than this by which Karma will not cling to you."

The Narayana Upanishad says: "In the beginning these two roads were laid—the road through Karma and the road through Sannyasa. The latter consists in the renunciation of the threefold desire of wife, son and wealth. Of these, the road through Sannyasa is preferable."

The Taittireeya Upanishad also says· "Renunciation (Nyasa) certainly is to be preferred."

In the Gita also Sri Krishna mentions of Karma

Nishtha and Jnana Nishtha:

Lokesmin dvivdha nishtha pura prokta mayaanagha
Jnanayogena sankhyaanaam karmayogena yoginaam.

"In this world there is a two-fold path, as I have before said, O sinless one: that of Yoga by knowledge of the Sankhyas, and that of Yoga by action of the Yogis."

Here Sankhya Yoga signifies Vedanta and not the philosophy of Kapila Muni.

Bhagawan Vyasa, after much discussion told his son his firm conviction: "These then are the two roads on which the Vedas are based. Both the courses —one which leads to Karma and the other which draws away from Karma—have been explained, etc."

Nishtha means perfect devotion and sticking to one's ideal. There is no wavering or oscillation of the mind here. The Yogi of Karma Nishtha has the firm, unshakable conviction that his Nishtha will lead him to the goal and attainment of supreme bliss. He plunges himself in Karma. He is absorbed in Karma. Raja Janaka had his Nishtha in Karma Yoga. Sri Mahatma Gandhiji was a Yogi of Karma Nishtha. He never deviated from his ideal. He was established in his Nishtha. Nishtha is a *sine qua non* for success. Then only one can apply his full heart, mind and intellect to the work on hand. Failure is due to lack of Nishtha. Nishtha develops will-power. Nishtha

helps quick growth and rapid evolution. Nishtha removes the stumbling blocks on the path of realization.

4. TRANSCEND THE DWANDAS

Misery and happiness, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, life and death, good and evil are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Evil cannot exist without good. Life cannot exist without death. They are relative terms. Ignorant people want absolute happiness in this world. This is simply impossible and puerile. They want life without death, happiness without misery, gain without any loss. If you do not want death, give up life in the sensual plane. If you do not want pain, give up sensual pleasure. Pain and pleasure, life and death are linked together inseparably. Evil exists to glorify good. To glorify love there is the existence of hatred. Falsehood exists to glorify truth. A vagabond exists to glorify a saint. A prostitute exists to glorify a chaste Pativrata woman. A drunkard exists to glorify a teetotaller This world is a very big and marvellous museum If saints, honest people and sober men only exist in this world, it will look like a prison-house. Variety in manifestation is the Swabhava of Prakriti to keep up the charm of this world. Transcend the pairs of opposites or Dwandas and rest in the non-dual and absolute Brahman. There alone you will find absolute good, absolute bliss and absolute knowledge

5. NAISHKARMYA
(Actionless State)

Simply sitting quiet cannot make a man actionless (Naishkarmya). He will have a thousand and one Sankalpas in the mind. The mind must become perfectly quiet. One should be absolutely thoughtless. Then only does he gain freedom from action. I repeat again the words of the Gita:

"Nor can anyone, even for an instant, remain really actionless; for helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities born of nature." Ch. III-5.

The qualities force a man to do some action or other. Again the Gita says: "There is not an entity, either on earth, or again in heaven among the shining ones, that is liberated from these three qualities born of matter." That Yogi who has transcended the three qualities of Rajas, Tamas and Sattwa, and rests in the Self can be really actionless. The Lord further says: "Nor indeed can embodied beings completely relinquish action." Ch. XVIII-11. If anyone sits quiet by merely controlling the organs of action through the practice of Hatha Yoga, and if his mind constantly dwells on the objects of the senses, he is no doubt a perfect hypocrite. Lord Krishna extols the man "who, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, with the organs of action, without attachment performs Yoga by action, he is worthy." Ch. III-7. In verse three of the same chapter He says: "Nobody

can attain perfection, *i.e.*, freedom from action and devotion in the path of Jnana Yoga by mere renunciation, by merely abandoning action without acquiring Brahma Jnana."

6. MEDITATION AND ACTION

That man who meditates in a cave in the Himalayas finds it difficult to work in the world. He cannot meditate in the upstairs of a building that is situated in the heart of a city. That man who works in the world finds it equally difficult to remain in a solitary place. Both have not got a balanced mind. Both are not perfect. Both have a one-sided development. The man who can meditate in a solitary retreat for six months and who can work in the world for another six months whole-heartedly, is an ideal Yogi or a perfect man He is the ideal Karma Yogi He is really a strong man. He has integral development. Nothing can upset his mind even when he is placed under any unfavourable conditions and bad environments

If one has practised Pratyahara or abstraction of the senses he can withdraw his mind, just as the tortoise or snail withdraws its feet underneath its shell. No sound can disturb his mind The firing of a cannon, the rolling sound of motor lorries and bullock-carts in the streets cannot make any impression in his mind. He is practically dead to the world, but he is really very busy inside He can

5. NAISHKARMYA
(Actionless State)

Simply sitting quiet cannot make a man actionless (Naishkarmya). He will have a thousand and one Sankalpas in the mind. The mind must become perfectly quiet. One should be absolutely thoughtless. Then only does he gain freedom from action. I repeat again the words of the Gita:

"Nor can anyone, even for an instant, remain really actionless; for helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities born of nature." Ch. III-5.

The qualities force a man to do some action or other. Again the Gita says: "There is not an entity, either on earth, or again in heaven among the shining ones, that is liberated from these three qualities born of matter." That Yogi who has transcended the three qualities of Rajas, Tamas and Sattwa, and rests in the Self can be really actionless. The Lord further says: "Nor indeed can embodied beings completely relinquish action." Ch. XVIII-11. If anyone sits quiet by merely controlling the organs of action through the practice of Hatha Yoga, and if his mind constantly dwells on the objects of the senses, he is no doubt a perfect hypocrite. Lord Krishna extols the man "who, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, with the organs of action, without attachment performs Yoga by action, he is worthy." Ch. III-7. In verse three of the same chapter He says: "Nobody

can attain perfection, *i.e.,* freedom from action and devotion in the path of Jnana Yoga by mere renunciation, by merely abandoning action without acquiring Brahma Jnana."

6. MEDITATION AND ACTION

That man who meditates in a cave in the Himalayas finds it difficult to work in the world. He cannot meditate in the upstairs of a building that is situated in the heart of a city. That man who works in the world finds it equally difficult to remain in a solitary place. Both have not got a balanced mind. Both are not perfect. Both have a one-sided development. The man who can meditate in a solitary retreat for six months and who can work in the world for another six months whole-heartedly, is an ideal Yogi or a perfect man. He is the ideal Karma Yogi He is really a strong man. He has integral development. Nothing can upset his mind even when he is placed under any unfavourable conditions and bad environments.

If one has practised Pratyahara or abstraction of the senses he can withdraw his mind, just as the tortoise or snail withdraws its feet underneath its shell. No sound can disturb his mind. The firing of a cannon, the rolling sound of motor lorries and bullock-carts in the streets cannot make any impression in his mind. He is practically dead to the world, but he is really very busy inside. He can

convert a busy city into a big forest. But if a man has no abstraction or concentration he will find a big city in the thick of the forest. Aspirants should watch and test the mind always. They should try to keep this perfect balance. Real meditation gives immense inner strength. If one cannot realize this inner peace and strength, surely there is some error in Sadhana or meditation. Building castles in the air or Manoraja, Tandri and Alasya, sleepy state, brooding, and other negative states of the mind should not be mistaken for Samadhi or meditation. Untrained, inexperienced aspirants always make mistakes and are deluded.

A microscopic minority only are fit for full and deep meditation. The vast majority should combine meditation with action in the beginning. When they really advance in meditation, they can slowly give up action.

7. KILL DESIRE

Arjuna said: "But, dragged on by what does a man commit sin, reluctantly indeed, O Varshneya, as it were by force constrained?" The Blessed Lord said: "It is desire, it is wrath, begotten by the quality of mobility, all-consuming and all-polluting—know thou this as our foe here on earth. As a flame is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo is wrapped by the amnion, so this is enveloped by it. Enveloped is divine wisdom by this constant enemy of the wise in the form of desire,

which is insatiable as a flame. The senses, the mind and the reason are said to be its seat; by these, enveloping wisdom, it bewilders the dweller in the body. Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, mastering first the senses, do thou slay this thing of sin, destructive of wisdom and knowledge. It is said that the senses are great; greater than the senses is the mind; greater than the mind is reason; but that which is greater than reason, is He. Thus understanding Him as greater than reason, restraining the self by the Self, slay thou, O mighty-armed, the enemy in the form of desire, difficult to overcome." Ch. III-36-43.

Desires can never be satiated or cooled down by the enjoyment of objects. But as fire blazes forth the more when fed with butter and wood, so it grows the more when it feeds on objects of enjoyment.

If all the foods of the earth, all the precious metals, all animals, and all beautiful women were to pass into the possession of a man deluded by desire, they would fail to give him satisfaction.

Raja Yayati said: "O son, I have enjoyed with your youth to the full extent of my desires and to the full limit of my powers and according to their seasons—but desires never die. They are never satiated by indulgence. By indulgence they flame up like sacrificial fire with ghee poured into it. If one becomes the sole Lord of all the earth with its paddy, oats, gems, beasts and women, still it will not be considered by him enough. Therefore the thirst for

enjoyment should be abandoned. The thirst for enjoyment which is difficult to be cast off by the wicked, which does not fail even with the failing of life, is truly a fatal disease in man. To get rid of this thirst is real happiness."

Understand that desire that is born of the quality of Rajas is man's enemy in this Samsara. The real enemy of the whole world is desire. It is from this desire that all the evils and miseries come to human beings. When desire manifests, it goads man to action and so he commits sins of various sorts. When a man's desire is not gratified, when one stands in the way of its fulfilment, he becomes angry. The desire gets transmuted into anger. When one is under the sway of anger, he will commit all sorts of sins. He loses his memory, intellect and understanding. An angry man commits murder. He himself does not know what he is exactly doing. He becomes very emotional and impulsive. All evil actions and evil qualities proceed from anger.

When desire gets hold of a man, it hides the knowledge of his true nature from him. Desire enshrouds wisdom, just as smoke enshrouds fire. He becomes egoistic. He gets deluded. He becomes a slave of passion and gets miseries of all sorts.

The Indriyas or senses bring the man in contact with external objects and the desires are thereby created. But the senses are not all-in-all. If the mind co-operates with the Indriyas, then only is mischief

wrought. Mind is more powerful than the Indriyas. Mind is the commander. Reason is more powerful than the mind. Even if the mind brings a message into the mental factory by its association with the Indriyas, the pure reason can reject it altogether. Reason is more powerful than the mind. Behind reason is the Self who is the director and witness of reason and who is superior to reason. Desire is of a highly complex and incomprehensible nature. Therefor, it is very diffcult to be eradicated or conquered. But with the help of pure reason all desires can be eventually destroyed. There is no doubt of this. Then you will get knowledge of the Atman which brings immortality, supreme peace and eternal bliss.

The cause of human suffering is Avidya or ignorance. Sri Sankara holds the view that it is the knowledge of Brahman only that is capable or eradicating the ignorance of human beings. Others hold the view that the pursuit of the knowledge of the Self should be accompanied by the performance of Vedic and Smarta rites. This view is known as the Samuchchaya-Vada, because the theory entails a conjunction of two means for the realization of one end. They bring the illustration of the bird. Just as a bird necessarily needs two wings for flying up in the sky, so the individual soul also requires both knowledge and action to enable him to attain Moksha or the final beatitude and that neither the one nor the other is sufficient singly for that purpose.

Karmas, when they are performed as Ishwararpana without expectation of fruits, purify the heart. They prepare the ground of Antahkarana for the dawn of Brahma Jnana. Sri Sankara says in his *Atma Bodha:* "Karmic rituals cannot destroy ignorance, because they are not hostile to each other. But knowledge certainly destroys ignorance, as light destroys the thickest darkness. When compared with other means, Jnana (knowledge of the Self) is the only direct means to freedom. As cooking is not possible without fire, so is emancipation not possible without Brahma Jnana." Sri Sankara refutes the theory of Samuchchaya-Vada.

Neophytes and young men can have work and meditation in the beginning for some years. When they advance in meditation, work must be completely stopped. It becomes a hindrance. That is the reason why the Gita says:

Arurukshor Muner Yogam Karma Karanam Uchyate, Yogarudhasya tasyaiva Shamah Karanam uchyate.

"For a sage who is seeking Yoga, action is called the means; for the same sage when he is enthroned in Yoga, serenity is called the means." Ch. VI-3.

Only that advanced Yogi who can meditate for hours together can stop work. If ordinary students give up work they will become Tamasic and lazy. If you do not improve in pure meditation, then combine

work with meditation. Use your common sense always. One can reach a certain stage only in Yoga, Jnana or Bhakti while he remains in the world. Seclusion and Nivritti are needed for highest realization. The full-blown Yogi or Jnani or Bhakta should again come back to the world to elevate other people, for the purpose of Lokasangraha (world-solidarity).

9. SANNYASINS, WAKE UP!

Mere study of Vichara-Sagara or Panchadasi cannot bring in the experience of pure, Adwaitic consciousness. Vedantic gossiping and idle, dry talk on the Brahma Sutras and the Upanishads cannot help a man in feeling the unity or oneness of life. There is no hope for this man to feel the Adwaitic unity of consciousness—*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*— "All this indeed is Brahman," unless the aspirant destroys ruthlessly all sorts of Ghrina, hatred, petty-mindedness, jealousy, envy, idea of superiority and all barriers that separate man from man, by incessant, protracted service of humanity with the right mental attitude or divine Bhav. Practical Vedanta is rare in these days. There are only dry discussions and meaningless fights over the non-essentials of various religions.

The central teaching of the Gita is Self-realization *in* and *through* the world. The same thing is preached by Sri Vasishtha to Sri Rama. To serve humanity,

Karmas, when they are performed as Ishwararpana without expectation of fruits, purify the heart. They prepare the ground of Antahkarana for the dawn of Brahma Jnana. Sri Sankara says in his *Atma Bodha:* "Karmic rituals cannot destroy ignorance, because they are not hostile to each other. But knowledge certainly destroys ignorance, as light destroys the thickest darkness. When compared with other means, Jnana (knowledge of the Self) is the only direct means to freedom. As cooking is not possible without fire, so is emancipation not possible without Brahma Jnana." Sri Sankara refutes the theory of Samuchchaya-Vada.

Neophytes and young men can have work and meditation in the beginning for some years. When they advance in meditation, work must be completely stopped. It becomes a hindrance. That is the reason why the Gita says:

Arurukshor Muner Yogam Karma Karanam Uchyate, Yogarudhasya tasyaiva Shamah Karanam uchyate.

"For a sage who is seeking Yoga, action is called the means; for the same sage when he is enthroned in Yoga, serenity is called the means." Ch. VI-3.

Only that advanced Yogi who can meditate for hours together can stop work. If ordinary students give up work they will become Tamasic and lazy. If you do not improve in pure meditation, then combine

work with meditation. Use your common sense always. One can reach a certain stage only in Yoga, Jnana or Bhakti while he remains in the world. Seclusion and Nivritti are needed for highest realization. The full-blown Yogi or Jnani or Bhakta should again come back to the world to elevate other people, for the purpose of Lokasangraha (world-solidarity).

9. SANNYASINS, WAKE UP!

Mere study of Vichara-Sagara or Panchadasi cannot bring in the experience of pure, Adwaitic consciousness. Vedantic gossiping and idle, dry talk on the Brahma Sutras and the Upanishads cannot help a man in feeling the unity or oneness of life. There is no hope for this man to feel the Adwaitic unity of consciousness—*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*—"All this indeed is Brahman," unless the aspirant destroys ruthlessly all sorts of Ghrina, hatred, petty-mindedness, jealousy, envy, idea of superiority and all barriers that separate man from man, by incessant, protracted service of humanity with the right mental attitude or divine Bhav. Practical Vedanta is rare in these days. There are only dry discussions and meaningless fights over the non-essentials of various religions.

The central teaching of the Gita is Self-realization *in* and *through* the world. The same thing is preached by Sri Vasishtha to Sri Rama. To serve humanity,

God in manifestation, and to think of God, while living in the world amidst various activities is far superior to a cave-life. Selfless work is Yoga. Work is Atma-Pooja. There is no loss in Nishkamya Karma. Real spiritual progress starts in Nishkamya Karma Yoga.

Just as a medical student cannot understand pathology, diagnosis and medicine, if he neglects to study physiology and morphology in the beginning, so also the aspirant cannot understand and realize the spirit and object of Vedanta, if he neglects to practise Nishkamya Yoga to eradicate the impurities of his mind. Practice of Karma Yoga eventually culminates in the realization of Vedantic unity of Self.

Sarvam karmakhilam Partha jnane parisamapyate.

"All actions in the entirety, O Partha, culminate in wisdom," says Lord Krishna to Arjuna. There is not even an iota of hope to realize the Self without self-purification by Nishkamya Karma Yoga.

Serve everyone with intense love, without the idea of agency, without expectation of fruits, reward or even appreciation. Utilise this body-machine in selfless works. Feel that you are only Nimitta (instrument) in the hands of God, or a Sakshi of Prakriti's activities, when you do Karma Yoga. Worship God in the poor and the sick. Have no attachment to any place, person or thing. Keep up the mental poise amidst the toil and moil of the world without con-

siderations of success or failure, gain or loss, victory or defeat, respect or disrespect, pleasure or pain. Always have a balanced mind. Have the mind firmly rooted in the Self amidst all activities. Then you will become a true Karma Yogi. Work elevates, when done in the right spirit. Even if people scoff at you, revile, beat, kill or taunt you, always be indifferent. Be steady in your Sadhana.

This Sadhana demands constant practice, steadfastness, patience, perseverance and endurance. Practice of combined Karma and Jnana Yoga in the world is far more difficult than the practice of pure Jnana Yoga in a cave of Himayalan retreats. The former Yogi will have no Vikshepa or tossing of mind, while the latter will be easily disturbed by a little sound or bustle of the city. To keep up meditation while performing actions is a different kind of difficult Sadhana. The Yogi who keeps up meditation while performing actions is a powerful Yogi indeed. He has a different mind altogether.

People do not want to remove Mala (impurities) by Nishkamya Karma Yoga. They think that service and Bhakti are nothing. They at once shave their heads, put on coloured clothes and remain in a cave, posing as great Munis or Yogis. People study a few books on Vedanta and style themselves as Jivanmuktas. This is a serious mistake. Even if there is one real Jivanmukta, he is a great dynamic force to guide the whole world. Some Sannyasins of the old,

orthodox school think that a Jivanmukta is without powers. A Jivanmukta is a dynamic personality with full powers. He can change or alter the destiny of the whole world.

This is the difference between a worldly-minded man and a trained Karma Yogi or a Sannyasin who works for the Lokasangraha or uplift of humanity. A Karma Yogi or a Sannyasin works with Akarta and Sakshi Bhav, without attachment or idea of agency and with the strong Nischaya or determination that the world is unreal and that the world is nothing but Atman or Brahman. This work is not work at all. This is 'inaction in action'. This will not bring bondage. This Jnanagni or fire of wisdom burns all fruits of action. A worldly-minded man works with the idea of "I am the doer" and with expectation of fruits, and thinks that this world is a solid reality. This brings on bondage.

A long stay in caves makes a man Tamasic and unfit for energetic, active service of humanity. A recluse is afraid when he sees a big crowd or a bevy of ladies. A little sound throws him out of balance. A recluse in forests will have to test his real, inner strength by occasional visits to the plains and service of humanity. A proper understanding of the Maya-Vada is very necessary. The present deplorable condition of India is due to lack of right understanding of Maya-Vada. If some occasional batches of Sannyasins come out from their retreats and work in the

world vigorously in a systematic manner according to their capacity, temperament and taste, we will indeed have a new and glorious India, full of new religious life with spiritual and moral upheaval.

This is a dire need of the present hour. A thorough overhauling of the organisation of this fourth order of life—Sannyasa—is an imperative necessity. Mere social service in some form or other and a little Katha or preaching here and there will not bring about satisfactory results. A drastic form of service is indispensably requisite. How active was Sri Sankara himself, the propounder of Maya-Vada! Look at the magnanimous work turned out by him! He preached against selfish Karmas only. He was not against selfless actions. He himself was a wonderful Karma Yogi!

Let us all follow in his footsteps and his ideal and remove the wrong impressions that are formed in the minds of our countrymen. It is only Sannyasins bold who have worked wonders in the past. They can do wonders now also. They are whole-timed free men. They are full of energy, concentration, strength, purity and capacity. They have spiritual and ethical powers. They can undoubtedly thrill and electrify the whole world in the twinkling of an eye. Glory, glory to such exalted Sannyasins, children of Sri Sankara and Dattatreya, the real spiritual kings and spiritual teachers of the three worlds! May their blessings be upon us all! May the Sannyasins guide and enlighten

the people who are sunk hopelessly and deplorably in the mire of Samsara! May the householders get their spiritual instructions with full Bhav and Sraddha and serve the Sannyasins with great care and sincerity!

10. PRACTICE OF BRAHMACHARYA

As the practice of Karma Yoga is not possible without Brahmacharya, I have given here a short description of the methods by which one can be established in physical and mental celibacy.

One of the students of Dhanvantari approached his teacher after finishing his full course of Ayurveda and asked him: "O Bhagavan, kindly let me know the secret of health now." Dhanvantari replied: "This Veerya (seminal energy) is verily Atman. The secret of health lies in preservation of this vital force. He who wastes this energy cannot have physical, mental, moral and spiritual development."

If the Veerya is lost, Prana gets unsteady. Prana is agitated. The man becomes nervous. Then the mind also cannot work properly. The man becomes fickle-minded. There is mental weakness.

According to Ayurveda semen is the last Dhatu that is formed out of Majja or marrow. From food chyle (Rasa) is manufactured. Out of chyle comes blood (Rakta); out of blood comes flesh; out of flesh comes fat; out of fat comes marrow; out of marrow

comes semen. These are the seven Dhatus. There are three divisions in each Dhatu. Semen nourishes the physical body, heart and intellect. That man who uses his physical body only but keeps the intellect and heart undeveloped cannot expect to attain perfect Brahmacharya. He can have Brahmacharya of the body only but not of the mind and heart. The semen that belongs to the heart and mind will certainly flow out. If an aspirant does regular prayer, Japa and meditation only, if he does not develop the heart and if he does not practise physical exercise, he will have mental Brahmacharya only. That portion of the semen which goes to nourish the heart and body will flow out. But an advanced Yogi who does higher, deep meditation will have full Brahmacharya even if he does not take physical exercise.

The ignorant man is an instrument in the hands of his Samskaras and Karmas. He slowly gains strength by understanding his real essential nature, by doing spiritual Sadhana and by removing desires and egoism.

This world is nothing but sex and ego. Ego is the chief thing. It is the basis. Sex hangs on the ego. If the ego is destroyed by Vichara or enquiry of "Who am I," the sex-idea takes to its heels by itself. Man, master of his destiny, has lost his divine glory and has become a slave, a tool, in the hands of sex and ego on account of ignorance. Sex and ego are the products of Avidya or nescience. The dawn of know-

ledge of the Self annihilates these two enemies of the Atman, the two dacoits who are plundering the helpless, ignorant, little, false Jiva, the illusory "I".

If the sexual energy is transmuted into Ojas or spiritual energy by pure thoughts, it is called sex-sublimation in Western psychology. Just as metals and chemicals are purified by heating, so also the sexual energy is purified and changed into divine energy by spiritual Sadhana, by entertaining sublime, soul-elevating thoughts of the Self or Atman. In Yoga he is called an Oordhvareta in whom the seminal energy has flown upwards into the brain as Ojas Shakti. There is no possibility of the semen going downward through sexual excitement.

This process is extremely difficult. It demands constant and protracted Sadhana and perfect discipline. That Yogi who has achieved perfect sublimation has perfect control over lust. There is no fear of his downfall. He is perfectly safe. He can embrace young women, and yet he will be absolutely free from any impurity. This stage is a very high stage. A very small minority only have attained this sublime exalted state. Sri Sankara, Sri Dattatreya and Jnana Dev of Alandi had reached this stage.

That Yogi who has disciplined himself through ceaseless and protracted Sadhana, continuous meditation, Pranayama and Atmic Vichara, the practice of Shama, Dama, Yama and Niyama, is also safe, although he has not attained the state of perfect

sex-sublimation. He will have no attraction for women. He has thinned out the mind. The mind is starved to death. It cannot raise its hood. It cannot hiss.

That Yogi or Jnani who has attained the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi, in whom the seeds of Samskaras are fried *in toto* can claim to be a perfect Oordhavareta or one who has complete sex-sublimation.

The process of sex-sublimation is very difficult and yet it is most necessary for the aspirant in the path of spirituality. It is the most important qualification for the aspirant, either in the path of Karma Yoga, Upasana, Raja Yoga or Vedanta. You must achieve this at any cost. You will surely attempt this in some future birth. But why not now?

Brahmacharya is a fundamental pre-requisite for an aspirant. If one has this qualification or merit, all other merits will cling to him. All divine qualities will come by themselves.

The practice of celibacy is not attended with any danger or any diseases or any undesirable results such as the various sorts of 'complex' which are wrongly attributed by Western psychologists. They have a a wrong, ill-founded imagination that the ungratified sex-energy assumes the various forms of 'complex' in disguise, such as touch-phobia, etc. The complex is due to some other causes. It is a morbid state of mind due to excessive jealousy, hatred, anger, worry

and depression brought about by various causes.

On the contrary, even a little self-restraint or a little practice of continence is an ideal 'pick-me-up'. It gives inner strength and peace of mind. It invigorates the mind and the nerves. It helps to conserve physical and mental energy. It augments memory, will-force and brain-power. It bestows tremendous strength, vigour and vitality. It renovates the system or constitution, rebuilds the cells and tissues, helps digestion and gives power to face the difficulties in the daily battle of life. A perfect celibate can shake the world, can stop the ocean waves like Lord Jesus, can blow up mountains, can command Nature and the five elements like Jnana Dev. There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be achieved by him. All Siddhis and Riddhis roll at his feet.

It is quite possible for a man to practise celibacy while remaining in the world, albeit there are various sorts of temptations and distractions. Many have achieved this in times of yore. There are many even at the present time also. A well disciplined life, study of religious literature, Satsang, Japa, Dhyana, pure and moderate diet, Pranayama, daily introspection and enquiry, self-analysis and self-correction, practice of Yama, Niyama, physical and mental Tapas and Sadachara in accordance with the teachings of the seventeenth chapter of the Gita—all will pave a long way in the attainment of this end. People have an irregular, unrighteous, immoderate, irreligious, un-

and depression brought about by various causes.

On the contrary, even a little self-restraint or a little practice of continence is an ideal 'pick-me-up'. It gives inner strength and peace of mind. It invigorates the mind and the nerves. It helps to conserve physical and mental energy. It augments memory, will-force and brain-power. It bestows tremendous strength, vigour and vitality. It renovates the system or constitution, rebuilds the cells and tissues, helps digestion and gives power to face the difficulties in the daily battle of life. A perfect celibate can shake the world, can stop the ocean waves like Lord Jesus, can blow up mountains, can command Nature and the five elements like Jnana Dev. There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be achieved by him. All Siddhis and Riddhis roll at his feet.

It is quite possible for a man to practise celibacy while remaining in the world, albeit there are various sorts of temptations and distractions. Many have achieved this in times of yore. There are many even at the present time also. A well disciplined life, study of religious literature, Satsang, Japa, Dhyana, pure and moderate diet, Pranayama, daily introspection and enquiry, self-analysis and self-correction, practice of Yama, Niyama, physical and mental Tapas and Sadachara in accordance with the teachings of the seventeenth chapter of the Gita—all will pave a long way in the attainment of this end. People have an irregular, unrighteous, immoderate, irreligious, un-

disciplined life. Just as the elephant throws sand on its head, so also they themselves bring difficulties and troubles on their own heads on account of their foolishness.

Varnashrama Dharmas are practically extinct now. Every one is a Vaishya only with greed for the accumulation of wealth by hook or by crook, by begging, borrowing or stealing. Almost all Brahmins are Vaishyas only. There is no real Brahmin or Kshatriya in these days. All want money anyhow. They do not attempt to practise the Dharmas of their order of life. This is the fundamental cause for the downfall of man. If the householder discharges the duties of his stage of life strictly, if he is an ideal Grahastha there is no necessity for taking Sannyasa. The swelling up in the number of Sannyasins at the present moment is due to the failure of the householders in the discharge of their duties. The life of an ideal householder is as much difficult and rigid as that of an ideal Sannyasin. Pavritti Marga or the path of Karma Yoga is as much difficult and rigid as that of *Nivritti* Marga or the path of renunciation

Sex-sublimation is within your reach if you wish to attain it. The path is quite clear, straight and smooth, if you understand it, and if you apply yourself with patience, perseverance, determination and strong will, if you practise discipline of the Indriyas, right conduct, right thinking, right acting, regular meditation, auto-suggestion and enquiry of 'Who am

I'? The Atman is Nirvikara. Feel this. Can there be any trace of lust or impurity in the eternal and pure Atman?

Thou art Nitya, Suddha, Buddha, Mukta Atman (eternal, pure, perfect, all-wise, free Self). O sweet beloved Paramananda! Feel this. Assert this birthright. Claim this hereditary property. You can even fight with that 'Old Man of the Upanishads'. Claim this birthright amidst type-writing, arranging chapters of a book and other multifarious work. This is better than the life in a cave. This is dynamic, integral Yoga of Siva. This was the Yoga of Sri Sankara and Lord Buddha also.

Oordhvareta Yogi

Mind, Prana and Veerya (semen) are one. Mind and Prana have affinity for each other like milk and water. Mind, Prana and Veerya are under one Sambandha (connection or circuit). If the mind is well controlled, Prana and Veerya are automatically controlled. He who suspends or restrains the breath, restrains also the working of the mind and the movement of semen. Again, if the Veerya is controlled, and if it is made to flow upwards into the brain by pure thoughts, through the practice of Pranayama and Vipareet Karani Mudras such as Sarvangasana and Sirshasana, the mind and Prana are automatically controlled.

He who has controlled the mind has controlled also the breath. The mind is set in motion or rendered active by two things, viz., the vibration of Prana and Vasanas (subtle desires). If one of these two dies, the other also dies by itself. Where the mind is absorbed, there the Prana is restrained; and where the Prana is fixed, there the mind is also absorbed. Mind and Prana are intimate companions, like man and his shadow. If the mind and Prana are not restrained, all the Indriyas, organs of sensation and action keep actively engaged in their respective functions.

An Akhanda Brahmachari who has not allowed even a drop of semen to come out for a period of twelve years, will enter into Samadhi without any effort. Prana and mind are under his perfect control. Bala-Brahmacharya is a synonymous term for unbroken (Akhanda) Brahmacharya. An Akhanda Brahmachari has strong Dharana Shakti (power of grasping), retentive memory (Smriti Shakti) and Vichara Shakti (power of enquiry). An Akhanda Brahmachari need not practise reflection (Manana) and meditation (Nididhyasan). Even if he hears once the Mahavakya or the great sentence of the Upanishads, he will at once achieve Atma Sakshatkara or Brahmanubhava (Self-realization). His intellect is pure and his understanding is extremely clear. There are some Akhanda Brahmacharis, but they are very rare. You can also become an Akhanda Brahmachari

if you attempt it in right earnest. Mere matted hair, application of ashes to the forehead and body cannot make one an Akhanda Brahmachari. The Brahmachari who has controlled the physical body and physical Indriyas but who constantly dwells on thoughts of sex is, as I have already pointed out, a confirmed hypocrite. He should never be trusted. He may become a menace at any time.

You will have to be very careful of reaction. The Indriyas that are under restraint for some months or for one or two years become rebellious, if you are not always careful and vigilant. They revolt and drag you out when opportunities arise. Some people who observe Brahmacharya for one or two years, become more passionate and waste the energy considerably in the end. Some become incorrigable, immoral wrecks also.

According to Yogic science, semen (Suklam or Sukram) exists in a subtle form throughout the whole body. It is withdrawn and elaborated into a gross form in the sex organ under the influence of the sexual will and excitement. To be an Oordhvareta is not merely to prevent the emission of gross semen already formed, but to prevent its formation as gross seed and absorb it into the general system. The body of a man who is a true Oordhvareta has the scent of the lotus. A chaste man in whom the gross semen is formed, may, on the other hand, have the odour of a goat. The semen dries up in those who practise

Pranayama seriously. The semen energy ascends up to the brain. It is stored up as Ojas Shakti (spiritual energy) and comes back as Amrita or nectar.

More energy is wasted during coition. The whole nervous system is shaken or agitated during the act. But it is not so when the emission occurs during the state of dream. Further the actual essence does not come out during wet-dreams. It is only the watery prostatic juice with a little semen that is discharged during nocturnal pollutions. When nocturnal pollutions take place, the mind which was working in the inner astral body suddenly enters the physical body in an agitated condition. That is the reason why the emission takes place suddenly.

The energy that is wasted during one sexual act tantamounts to the physical energy that is spent in physical labour for ten days, or mental energy that is utilised in mental work for three days Mark how precious is the vital fluid, semen!

Glory to those Yogis who have attained Oordhvareta or full sex-sublimation and who rest in their own Swaroopa! May we all practise perfect celibacy through the practice of Shama, Dama, discrimination, Vichara, Vairagya, Pranayama, Japa, Dhyana and Asanas and reach the goal of life! May the indweller of our hearts grant us spiritual strength to control the Indriyas and the mind! May we all become full Oordhvareta Yogis like Sri Sankara, Sri Jnana Dev and others of yore! May their blessings be upon us!

11. GLORY OF BRAHMACHARYA

There cannot be any language without vowels. You cannot draw a picture without a canvas or wall. You cannot write anything without paper. Even so, you cannot have health and spiritual life without Brahmacharya. It gives maerial progress and psychic advancement. Brahmacharya is the basis for eternal life. It is a substratum for a life in the Atman. It is the shield for waging war against the internal Asuras—anger, lust and greed. It serves as a gateway to bliss beyond. It opens the door of Moksha. It contributes to perennial joy, uninterrupted and unalloyed bliss. Even Rishis, Devas, Gandharvas and Kinnares serve at the feet of a true Brahmachari. Even Ishwara applies to his forehead the dust of the feet of a genuine celibate. It is the only key to open the Sushumna and awaken the Kundalini. It brings glory, fame, virtue and Pratishtha. Eight Siddhis and nine Riddhis roll under his feet. They are ever ready to obey his command. The Lord of Death flees away from him. Who can describe the magnanimity, glory and majesty of a true Brahmachari!

Pure air, pure water, wholesome food, physical exercise, outdoor games like tennis—all contribute to the maintenance of good health, strength and a high standard of vigour and vitality. There are indeed many ways to gain health and strength. These ways are doubtless indispensably requisite. But Brahma-

charya is the most important of all. It is a masterkey to open the realms of health and happiness. It is the cornerstone of the edifice of bliss and unalloyed felicity. It is the only specific that keeps up true manliness.

Ojas is spiritual energy that is stored up in the brain. By sublime thoughts, meditation, Japa, worship and Pranayama, the sexual energy can be transmuted into Ojas Shakti and stored up in the brain. This energy can be utilised for divine contemplation and spiritual pursuits.

Anger and muscular energy can also be transmuted into Ojas. A man who has a great deal of Ojas in his brain can turn out immense mental work. He is very intelligent. He has a magnetic aura in his face and lustrous eyes. He can influence the people by speaking a few words. A short speech can produce a tremendous impression on the minds of hearers. His speech is thrilling. He has an awe-inspiring personality. Sri Sankara, an Akhanda Brahmachari, worked wonders through his power of Ojas. He did Dig-Vijaya and held controversies and heated debates in different parts of India with the learned scholars through his power of Ojas. A Yogi always directs his attention to the accumulation of this divine energy by unbroken chastity.

Have you realised, my dear friends, the importance of Brahmacharya? Have you recognized, my dear brothers, the true significance and glory of Brahma-

charya? How can you expect to be strong and healthy, if the energy that is acquired through various means with great difficulty, is wasted daily. It is impossible to be strong and healthy unless males and females, boys and girls, try their level best to keep up Brahmacharya or the vow of celibacy.

What, then, is Brahmacharya? Brahmacharya is absolute freedom from sexual desire. He or she must be free from the lustful look even. The look must be perfectly chaste. Lord Jesus says: "If you have a lustful look, you have already committed adultery in the heart." One should not even dream of touching a woman with lustful desire. A real Brahmachari will not feel any difference in touching a woman, a piece of paper or a block of wood.

What do we see in these days? Boys and girls, men and women, are drowned in the ocean of impure thoughts, lustful desires and little sensual pleasures. It is highly deplorable indeed. It is shocking to hear some of the stories of boys. Many college boys have personally come to me and narrated their pitiable lives. Their power of discrimination (Viveka) has been lost owing to sexual excitement and lustful intoxication. Why do you lose the energy that is gained in many weeks and months for the sake of a little momentary sensual pleasure?

Mark carefully the evil after-effects that follow the loss of energy! The body and mind refuse to work energetically. There is physical and mental lethargy.

You experience much exhaustion and weakness. You will have to take recourse to drinking milk, to eating fruits, aphrodisiac confections, etc. to make good the loss of energy. Remember that these things can never repair the loss. Once lost it is lost for ever. You will have to drag on a dreary, cheerless existence. Bodily and mental strength get diminished.

Those who have lost much of their Veerya become very irritable. They lose their balance of mind quickly. Little things upset their minds. Those who have not observed the vow of celibacy become slaves of anger, jealousy, laziness and fear. If you have not got your senses under control, you venture to do foolish acts which even children will not dare to do.

In olden days boys in Gurukula were healthy and strong. They had long life There is no real ethical culture in modern schools and colleges. The present system of education needs a drastic and radical change. Modern civilisation has enfeebled our boys and girls. They lead an artificial life. Children beget children. There is racial degeneration. The cinema is a curse. It excites the passions and emotions. It is the duty of the parents and teachers to explain to boys the importance of Brahmacharya and to instruct them the various methods by which they can preserve the Veerya, the soul-force or Atma Shakti that is hidden in them. Silent talks with boys, lantern-demonstrations, etc., will help a long way in improving their condition.

12. PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

A true Brahmachari only can cultivate Bhakti. A true Brahmachari only can practise Yoga. A true Brahmachari only can acquire Jnana. Without Brahmacharya no spiritual progress is possible. Therefore I have given below practical methods to get success in Brahmacharya.

Wet-dreams generally occur in the last quarter of the night. Those who are in the habit of getting up from bed between 3 and 4 a.m. and doing Japa, Pranayama and Dhyana can never fall victims to nocturnal pollutions.

Brahmacharis should entirely give up betel-chewing, cigarettes, tobacco, snuff, tea and coffee. Tobacco produces nicotine poisoning, tobacco heart (irritable heart), nervous diseases and tobacco amblyopia (eye disease).

That man in whom the sex-idea is deep-rooted, can never dream of understanding Vedanta and realizing Brahman even within one hundred crores of births.

Narada says in his Bhakti Sutras: "These (sexual) propensities, though they at first are like ripples, acquire the proportions of a sea, on account of bad company."—Sutra 45. Therefore shun evil company.

Looking at a woman will create a desire to talk to her. Talking with a woman will create a desire to touch her. Eventually you will have an impure mind

and will perish in the end. Therefore never look at a woman, never talk to a woman, O aspirants!

There are two types of Brahmacharis: the Naishthika, who is a celibate all throughout his life, and the Upakurvana, who will become a Grahastha or householder after the completion of his religious study.

There is no panacea more potent that Brahmacharya to eradicate this terrible malady—lust—of ignorant persons and to make the aspirants well-established in Brahman (Brahma Sthiti).

If you get wet-dreams, have a plunge-bath in the morning. Do twenty Pranayamas. Repeat the Gayatri Mantra 108 times. Pray to the sun: "O sun! Let my lost strength be restored—*Punar Mametu Indriyam.*

Persons other than householders should forbear to look at, touch, converse and cut jokes with women. They should avoid seeing the pairing of animals."—Bhagawata.

Narada says in his Sutras: "Do not listen to talks about women, rich men, atheists and enemies." There is great truth in his wise utterances. Talks about women will stir up passions. Talks about rich men will stir the mind to luxurious living. The mind has a great tendency to imitate.

Dear Shyama! You are Naishthika Brahmachari, one who has taken the vow of celibacy in thought, word and deed throughout the life. Now, even the sun will tremble before you, because he is afraid of

being pierced by you through your power of Brahmacharya. You are the glorious Sun of suns now.

The fly runs towards the fire or lamp thinking that it is a flower and gets burnt up. Even so, the passionate man runs towards a false beautiful form thinking that he can get real happiness, and gets himself burnt up in the fire of lust.

A deer is entrapped through sound; an elephant through touch; a fly through form; a fish through taste; a bee through smell. When such is the power of a single Indriya, what to speak of the combined effects of the five Indriyas of men?

How difficult it is control a servant of the house! How much more difficult it will be to control one Indriya! How still more difficult it will be to control the five Indriyas! That Yogi who has control of the Indriyas (Jitendriya) is a mighty potentate on earth. The bliss of Indra and Chakravati is nothing when compared to that of a Jitendriya Yogi. My silent adoration to such a Yogi!

Even among electrons there are bachelor electrons and married electrons. Married electrons manifest in pairs. Bachelor electrons exist singly. It is these bachelor electrons only that create magnetic electric force. The power of Brahmacharya is seen even in electrons. Friends, will you learn some lessons from these electrons? Will you practise Brahmacharya and develop power and spiritual force? Nature is your best teacher and spiritual guide.

What is the state of your mind when you attend a ball or nautch party, or when you read the 'Mysteries of the Court of London'? What is the state of your mind when you attend the Satsang of Swami Jayendrapuriji Maharaj at Benares on the bank of Ganges, *or when you study the soul-elevating classical Upanishads?* Compare and contrast your mental state. Remember, friend, that there is nothing so utterly ruinous to the soul as evil company. One should not even talk of stories of women, the luxurious ways of rich persons, rich foods, vehicles, politics, silken clothing, flowers, scents, etc. Because the mind gets easily excited it will begin to imitate the ways of luxurious persons. Desires will crop in. Attachments will also come in.

Immoral songs produce a very bad, deep impression in the mind. Aspirants should run away from places where vicious songs are sung.

Obscene pictures, vulgar words, novels which deal with love-stories, excite passion and produce ignoble, mean, undesirable sentiments in the heart. On the contrary, the sight of a good picture of Lord Krishna *or Lord Rama or Lord Jesus or Lord Budha* and the hearing of the sublime songs of Surdas, Tulsidas and Tyagaraj induce noble sentiments, thrill and produce tears of joy and Prem and elevate the mind to Bhav Samadhi instantaneously. Do you see clearly the difference now?

There is not much difference in sex between a boy

and a girl when they are very young. When they attain puberty, there is drastic change. Feelings, gestures, body, gait, talk, looks, movements, voice qualities and demeanour change altogether. Though a lady appears to be gentle and soft, yet she becomes rude, rough and distinctly masculine when she becomes angry. The feminine grace vanishes, when she is under the influence of wrath, indignation and fury. Have you ever seen ladies fighting in the streets? Ladies are more jealous than men. They have more Moha. They are eight times more passionate than men. Ladies have more power of endurance. They are more emotional. Males are more rational. Though females are more passionate, yet they have more power of restraint than males. After enticing men, they keep quiet. The real culprit is man only. He is aggressive. It is he who tastes the 'forbidden fruit' first. 'Forbidden fruit' is really knowledge of good and evil and right and wrong. Ladies can have Darshan of God easily, if they turn their minds to the spiritual path, as the element of love is predominant in them. Sneha Vritti is more developed in them.

Your motive in learning the Vajroli Mudra must be pure. You must have the one idea of getting Self-realization through absolute Brahmacharya. Have sex-sublimation. You must not misuse the power gained through Yogic Kriya. Analyse and scrutinise your motive thoroughly. There are very many temptations and dangers on the Yogic path. Beware, my

child Prem! I again and again warn you.

In the Hanuman Ghat, Benares, two girls were in a drowning condition. Two young men jumped immediately into the Ganges and saved the girls. One man asked one of the girls to marry him. The other man said: 'I have done my duty. God gave me an opportunity to serve and improve myself'. He had Chitta Suddhi. The external action was the same (the act of saving the life), but the motive was different in the two persons. The fruit must also be different.

Anger is nothing but a modification of passion or lust, like curd from milk. If passion is not gratified, and if anyone stands in the way of its fulfilment, the passionate man is sure to become indignant and furious. Infatuation or delusion, confusion of memory, loss of reason, etc., follow in the wake and he perishes. When a man is furious, nothing in the world can stop his anger. He will speak anything and do anything. He becomes uncontrollable.

Read the history of crimes, robbery, rape, kidnapping, assaults and murders that come up for trial before the Session Courts. Lust is at the root of all this. It may be lust for money or lust for carnal pleasures. The fight begins with a few hot words and ends with lathi charges, stabbing and murder. When the man becomes furious, he loses his reason and power of judgment. He does not know what he is really doing. A Bengalee used one word 'Sala' or 'Badmash' in anger against a Sikh, when he was

crossing the Ganges in a boat. The Sikh became very furious, caught hold of the neck of the Bengalee and threw him into the Ganges. The Bengalee was drowned. How mentally weak was that Sikh, though he was physically strong. A little sound, a single word upset his mind and threw him out of balance. He became a slave of anger. Had he possessed Viveka and Vichara, he would not have done this rash, brutal action. Just as the impurities of mountain-minerals are burnt thoroughly by the blower, so the stains committed by the Indriyas are burnt by controlling the Prana. Therefore practise Pranayama regularly. It is a great purifier.

13. IMPORTANCE OF BRAHMACHARYA

My dear brothers, the vital energy, the Veerya, which supports your life, which is the Prana of Pranas, which shines in our sparkling eyes, which beams in your shining cheeks, is a great treasure. It is the quintessence of blood. One drop of semen is manufactured out of forty drops of blood. Mark here how valuable this fluid is!

Brahmacharya is the basis for acquiring immortality. Brahmacharya brings material progress and psychic advancement. It is the substratum for a life of peace in the Atman. It is a potent weapon for waging war against the internal Asuras, viz., Kama, Kroda, Lobha, etc. It contributes to perennial joy,

uninterrupted and undecaying bliss. It gives tremendous energy, clear brain, gigantic will-power, bold understanding, retentive memory and good Vichara Shakti. Through Brahmacharya alone can you get physical, mental and spiritual advancement in life.

Modern Education

If you compare the present system of education with our ancient Gurukula system, there is a wide gulf between the two systems. Every student in the Gurukula had perfect moral training. This was the predominating feature of our ancient culture. Every student possessed humility, self-restraint, obedience, spirit of service and self-sacrifice, good demeanour, politeness, courteous nature and, last but not least, a desire for acquiring Atma Jnana.

In the present system, the moral side of education is absolutely ignored. The college students of the present day do not possess any virtues at all. Self-control is a thing unknown to them. Luxurious living and self-indulgence begin from their very boyhood. Arrogance, impertinence and disobedience are deep-rooted in them. They have become confirmed atheists and rank materialists. They have no knowledge of Brahmacharya and self-control. Fashionable dress, undesirable food, bad company, frequent attendance at theatres and cinemas, have rendered them weak and passionate. The Health Officers of

Calcutta reported that 75 per cent of students are unhealthy in Calcutta and Dacca. The Health Officers of Bombay reported that 90 per cent of students are unhealthy in Karachi and about 15 per cent are suffering from venereal diseases in Bombay. It has indeed been detected that the health of students has deteriorated throughout India. Moreover, the vices and bad practices which are ruining their health are on the increase among students. There is no ethical culture in modern schools and colleges. Modern education tends to develop the intellect only.

Duty of Teachers

A great and onerous duty rests upon the teachers and professors of schools in training the students in the path of Sadachara (right conduct) and in moulding their character properly. They themselves should be strictly moral and pure. They should be endowed with ethical perfection. Otherwise it will be like the blind leading the blind. Before taking to the profession of a teacher, every teacher should feel the high responsibility of his position in the educational line. Mere intellectual achievement in the art of delivering dry lectures alone will not suffice. This alone will not adorn a professor.

The future destiny of the world rests entirely in the lap of the teachers and the students. If the teachers train their students in the right direction, in the path of righteousness, the world will be filled

with good citizens, Yogis and Jivanmuktas who will radiate light, peace, bliss and joy everywhere.

O teachers and professors! Wake up now. Train the students in the path of Brahmacharya, righteousness and morality. Make them true Brahmacharis. Do no neglect this divine work. You are morally responsible for this onerous task. This is your Yoga. You can have Self-realization if you take up this work in right earnest. Be true and sincere. Open your eyes now.

Blessed is he who truly endeavours to make his students true Brahmacharis. Twice blessed is he who tries to become a real Brahmachari. May the blessings of Lord Krishna be upon them! Glory to the teachers, professors and students!

14. FASHION: A TERRIBLE CURSE

This subject is not foreign to Karma Yoga. Only he who wears simple dress, who is free from this terrible scourge of fashion can do Karma Yoga. One should be fully aware of the disastrous effects of fashion. Hence I have introduced this article here.

People are dying after fashion. Men and women have become absolute slaves of fashion. If there is a slight error in the cutting of a gown or uniform, there are damage-suits in courts in London and Paris against tailors. Even Lahore and Rawalpindi have become fashion-conscious now-a-days. You can see

the multifarious fashions in the evening. Fashion consists in half-nudity. They will call this scientific, hygienic ventilation of the exposed parts. Half the chest, half-arms and half-legs must be exposed. This is fashion. They have full control of their hair styles. This is their Siddhi or psychic power. They can cut it and dress it in any way they like in a hair-dressing salon. Fashion increases and excites passion.

Even a poor woman at Lahore pays five rupees for making a single ordinary frock. She never thinks a bit how her husband will be able to manage all these things. Poor husband, a slave of passion, a miserable soul, borrows something here and there, takes bribes in various ways and pleases his wife anyhow with an outward smile and an inward burning resentment. He kills his conscience, destroys his intellect and walks self-deluded in this world, and gets carbuncles and pyorrhoea as a result of his bad actions. He cries when he is trouble: "I am a great sinner. I cannot bear this pain. I have done many bad actions in my previous birth. O Lord! Forgive, save me." But he never tries a bit to improve his lot in this birth.

The whole world can be clothed out of the cuttings of the vain, fashionable people. Money is wasted enormously on fashion. Man wants, after all, very little on this earth—a pair of ordinary clothes, four slices of bread and a tumbler of cold water. If this money that is wasted on fashion is utilised in virtuous actions, in charity and service of society, man

will be transmuted into Divinity. He will be in the enjoyment of eternal peace and bliss. What do you see instead in fashionable people? Restlessness, anxiety, worry, fear, depression and pallor of face. They may be dressed in silken gowns or dinner suits in up-to-date fashion and style with stiff double collar ties and bows, but you see in their faces cheerlessness and ugliness. The canker of worry, greed, passion and hatred has eaten the very core of their hearts.

If you ask a Baron of England to remove his boots and hat when he is about to enter a Hindu temple, he feels he has lost all personality. Look at the vanity of an egoistic man! A small piece of leather, a cardboard covered with a cloth make up a mighty Baron; minus these he dwindles into an airy nothing. There is no spirit or strength in him. The pulse fails at the wrist. He cannot talk now with the same force. The world is full of people with a small heart and little understanding. They think that turbans and fashionable long-coats, hats and boots constitute a big man. A really big man is one who is simple and free from egoism and Raga Dwesha (likes and dislikes).

Why do ladies and men put on fashionable dress? They want to appear as important people in the eyes of others. They think they will get respect and honour by putting on fashionable dress. The wife wants to appear beautiful in the eyes of her husband. She wants to attract him. The husband puts on

fashionable dress to attract his wife. The sister of ill-fame wants to get more customers by putting on fashionable dress. This is all delusion. Can a fashionable dress give real beauty? This is all artificial decoration. It is temporary, false, decaying, glittering beauty! If you possess divine virtues such as mercy, sympathy, love, devotion and forbearance, you will be respected and really honoured. This will give everlasting beauty even though one is clad in rags.

Fashion is a terrible curse. It is a dreadful enemy of peace. It infuses evil thoughts, lust, greed and devilish tendencies. It fills the mind with worldly taints. It begets poverty. Fashion has made you a beggar of beggars. Annihilate this desire for fashion to the very root. Wear simple clothing. Have sublime thinking. Do not keep company with fashionable people. Remember those saints who lead a simple life and those living today who are very simple. Simplicity will cause piety. It will infuse divine thoughts. You will be free from worry and unnecessary thoughts. You can devote more time to divine contemplation and spiritual pursuits.

A Sattwic man or woman is really beautiful. He or she does not require any artificial decoration with gold pins, with nose-screws or with any ornament or fashionable dress. Millions of people are attracted unconsciously towards them, even when they are in very poor dress.

How simple was Mahatma Gandhi in his dress!

He had a loin cloth only. How simple was Ramana Maharishi? He had a Kowpeen only. A loin cloth and a Kowpeen were their personal effects. They did not want suit-cases or trunks to carry their dress. They were as free as a bird. Avadhoots like Krishnashram of Gangotri, Brahmendra Saraswati of Sendamangalam, Salem, South India, have not even a Kowpeen. They are absolutely nude. They are now in the same state as they were when they were born.

This body is like a big wound or ulcer with various filthy discharges. It has to be bandaged simply with any piece of cloth. Silken, laced borders and frills are not necessary. It is the height of folly to decorate this filthy perishable compound of flesh and bone with artistic borders. Have you realised your foolishness now? Stand up. Give up fashion now. Take a vow. Give me a definite promise that you will use simple clothing from this very second.

You came naked. You will go naked. Your silken waist-thread and upper-cloth even will be snatched for the use of your grand-children, when you are on the death-bed. Why then do you make these ceaseless selfish efforts for earning money and preparing fashionable dress? Realize your folly. Learn to discriminate. Get wisdom of the Self and rest in everlasting peace.

O fashionable man! O fashionable woman! O ye slayers of the inner Atman! Why do you waste your time, energy and life in vanity, in running after

fashionable dress. This is highly preposterous. The beauty of beauties, the undecaying source of beauty, the everlasting beauty is ever shining in the chambers of your heart. The whole beauty of this world is a mere shadow or reflection of that fountain-head of beauty. Purify your heart. Control your mind and the senses. Sit in a room and meditate on this Beauty of beauties, your immortal Friend, the Atman or the highest Self. Realize this Self. Then alone are you really beautiful. Then and then alone are you really happy. Then and then alone are you really rich. Then and then alone are you really a big man.

15. CONTROL OF SMOKING HABIT

He who smokes is unfit for the practice of Karma Yoga. He becomes dull when he cannot get a whiff of smoke. He cannot work in the absence of cigarettes. He wastes his money that can be very well utilised in the service of others. A Karma Yogi should be strictly free from the evil habit of smoking.

Smoking is an evil habit. Smokers bring a little bit of philosophy and medical opinion in support of their principles. They say: "Smoking keeps my bowels free. I get a good motion in the morning. It is very exhilarating to the lungs, brain and the heart. When I sit for meditation after a smoke, I meditate better. Why should I give it up?" Very sound philosophy indeed! They bring in ingenious arguments to support their

evil habit. They cannot get rid of this evil habit. They are heavy smokers who can finish a packet of cigarettes within a few hours. This habit starts from early boyhood. A little boy removes a cigarette from his elder brother's pocket and tries a first smoke. He gets a little tickling of nerves and hence he continues stealing daily. After some time he arrives at a stage when he finds it extremely hard to manage with a few cigarettes. He begins to steal money to get a packet independently. The father, brothers and sisters are all heavy smokers. They are the Gurus for these little boys for initiation in smoking. What a nasty state of affairs! Horrible indeed is the sight!

The parents are wholly and solely responsible for the evil conduct of their sons and daughters. Any intoxicant breeds a bad habit soon and the man finds it difficult to give up the habit. He falls a prey to smoking. Maya havocs through habits. This is the secret of her workings. You will not get an iota of benefit from smoking. Pray, give up this wrong, foolish imagination. Money is simply wasted. Smoking causes irritable heart, "tobacco heart" and amplyopia and other deadly diseases of the eyes, and nicotine poisoning of the system. Various nervous diseases and impotence also develop.

Short-sightedness, palpitation of the heart, irregular action of the heart, angina pectoris (a painful disease of the heart), gastric catarrh, throat troubles, inflammation of the trachea, tremors, muscular weak-

ness, etc., have been traced to smoking and the consequent nicotine poisoning. There is cumulative effect of nicotine from protracted smoking. The nicotine accumulates in the system by the addition of slow doses and produces deleterious effects on the constitution and different organs.

The correction of any evil habit is very simple. An advocate was a terrible smoker for a period of fifteen years. With one strong and powerful will he abandoned it entirely. Feel strongly first that you should give up that evil habit immediately. Think strongly of the advantages of sobriety and temperance. Then you have already attained success. Will strongly: "I will give up this intolerable habit this very second." You will succeed. Giving up any bad habit at once is better. The habit of slowly giving it up by gradual reduction generally does not turn out to be productive of good results. Beware of recurrences. Turn your face resolutely when a little temptation tries to reappear. Keep the mind fully occupied in your work. Be always busy. Entertain a strong desire: "I must become a great man presently." All these habits will take to their heels. Feel strongly: "I must become a spiritual man." All these habits will fly away. Use your subconscious mind for the eradication of your habits. It is your intimate bosom friend with whom you should keep companionship at all times. It will make matters all right. Establish new and healthy habits. Develop your will also. Give

up bad company and always enjoy Satsang or the company of learned Sadhus and Mahatmas. Their strong currents will overhaul your evil habits. Prayer, Japa and meditation will also help in the eradication of this evil habit. There is nothing impossible under the sun. Where there is a will there is a way.

16. MEAT-EATING

Meat is not at all necessary for the keeping up of health. Meat-eating is highly deleterious to health. It brings a host of ailments such as tapeworm, albuminuria and other diseases of the kidneys. After all, man wants very little on this earth. A few slices of bread and a little dhal will quite suffice to keep up his health, vigour and vitality. Killing of animals for food is a great sin. Instead of killing the egoism and the idea of "mine-ness", ignorant people kill innocent animals under the pretext of sacrifice to the goddess. But it is really to satisfy their tongue and palate. Horrible! Most inhuman! Ahimsa is the greatest of all virtues. *Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah.* Ahimsa is the first virtue that a spiritual aspirant should possess. We should have reverence for life. Lord Jesus says: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Lord Jesus and Mahavira shouted at the top of their voice: "Regard every living being as thyself and harm no one". The law of Karma is inexorable, unrelenting and immutable. The pain

you inflict upon another will rebound upon you and the happiness you radiate to another will come back to you, adding to your happiness.

Dr. J. Oldfield, senior physician, Lady Margaret Hospital, writes: "Today, there is the chemical fact in the hands of all, which none can gainsay, that the products of the vegetable kingdom contain all that is necessary for the fullest sustenance of human life. Flesh is unnatural food, and therefore tends to create functional disturbances. The manner in which it is taken in modern civilization, it is infected with such terrible diseases (readily communicable to man) as cancer, consumption, fever, intestinal worms, etc., to an enormous extent. There is little need for wonder that flesh-eating is one of the most serious causes of the diseases that carry off ninety-nine out of every hundred people that are born."

Meat-eating and alcoholism are closely allied. The craving for liquor dies a natural death when the meat diet is withdrawn. The question of birth-control becomes very difficult in the case of those who take meat diet. To them mind-control is absolutely impossible. Mark how the meat-eating tiger is ferocious, and the cow and elephant, which live on grass, are mild and peaceful! Meat has a direct evil influence in the compartments of the brain. The first step in spiritual advancement is the giving up of meat diet. The divine light will not descend if the stomach is loaded with meat diet. In large meat-eating countries

cancer mortality is very high. Vegetarians keep up sound health till old age. Even in the West in the hospitals, doctors are now putting patients on a vegetable diet. They convalesce very quickly.

Pythagoras, the Grecian sage preached: "Do not kill or injure any creature." He condemned meat diet as sinful food! Just hear what he says: "Beware, O mortals, of defiling your bodies with sinful food! There are cereals, there are fruits, bending their branches down by their weight, and luxurious grapes on the vines. There are sweet vegetables and herbs which the flame can render palatable and mellow. Nor are you denied milk, or honey, fragrant of the aroma of the thyma flower. The bountiful earth offers you an abundance of pure food and provides for meals obtainable without slaughter and bloodshed."

If you want to stop taking mutton, fish, etc., just see with your own eyes the pitiable, struggling condition of sheep at the time of killing. Now mercy and sympathy will arise in your heart. Then you will determine to give up meat-eating. If you fail in this attempt, change your environment and live in a vegetarian hotel where you cannot get flesh and move in that society where there is only vegetarian diet. Always think of the evils of flesh-eating and the benefits of a vegetable diet. If this also cannot give you sufficient strength to stop this habit, go to a slaughter-house and butcher's shop and personally see the disgusting rotten muscles, intestines, kidneys and

other parts of the animal which emit bad smell. This will surely induce Vairagya in you and a strong disgust and hatred for meat-eating.

17. GAMBLING

Gambling is another dreadful curse. It is a great friend of Satan or anti-God. It is Maya's great weapon. It has broken the hearts of many. It tantalizes, tempts and deludes. A little gain in the first betting itches the nerves of the gamblers and forces them to bet a large sum. Eventually they lose everything and return home with black or weeping faces. Man becomes bankrupt by gambling. He weeps bitterly. Yet he will not leave it. Maya havocs through wrong habits, wrong thinking, wrong Samskaras and through bad company, gambling, cinema, drinking, smoking and meat-eating. The intellect becomes clouded and blunt. Reason and discrimination fail. The intellect becomes perverted. An enormous amount of money is wasted uselessly in gambling and drinking. No virtue will dwell in the heart of a man who gambles. Gambling is a net spread by Maya to entrap the bewildered souls. There is no evil greater than gambling. All vices cling to a gambler. No real gain will come to a gambler. He is always drowned in sorrow. He drags a cheerless life from day to day. Card-play and horse-racing are modifications of gambling only.

O man! It is very difficult to get a human bir
Life is meant for God-realization. Perennial joy an
eternal bliss are in God. Do not waste this preciou
life in drinking, gambling, smoking and meat-eating
What will you say to the God of Death at the time o
your death? No one will help you. You will carry
your own thoughts and actions. Give up gambling,
meat-eating, drinking, cinema and smoking from this
very second. Give me a definite promise now. I am
your friend and well-wisher. Wake up now. Open
your eyes. Become a virtuous man. Do good actions.
Sing Hari's Name. God's Name is a potent antidote
for all evil habits. Study religious books. Seek the
company of sages and devotees. All evil habits will
be eradicated. Serve. Love. Give. Purify. Concen-
trate. Meditate. Realize this very second. Time is the
most precious thing in the world. Ignorant people
waste their whole time in playing cards and in
gambling. What a horrible state of affairs! Highly
deplorable! How powerful is Avidya or ignorance!
People are lamentably sunk in the mire of darkness!
Pitiable specimens of humanity! Slayers of Atma!
May Lord Krishnaswami, Antaryami, the Indweller
of your heart, give you strength to overcome all these
evil habits! May His blessing be upon you all!

Chapter Seven

KARMA YOGA IN THE GITA

1. THE WHEEL OF THE UNIVERSE

THIS world is action-bound except in the case of action for the sake of sacrifice (Yajna). If people do actions for the sake of the Lord, then they are not bound. The Lord of creation created human beings along with sacrifices. He said: "By this shall ye propagate; be this to you the giver of desires." Just as one can get any object from Kamadhenu, the cow of Indra, so also you can get anything by performing sacrifice. By this sacrifice you nourish or propitiate the gods, such as Indra, Varuna, etc. You will have plenty of crops and food. This is mutual service of men and Devas. Eventually you will obtain Sreyas or supreme good, the attainment of knowledge of Brahman. The sacrifice will purify your heart. The Devas will confer all enjoyments, cattle, woman, children and estate when they are pleased with your sacrifices. He who enjoys what is given by the gods without returning them anything, without discharging the debt due to the gods, he who feeds his own body and organs without propitiating the gods, is a thief indeed, a robber of the property of the gods.

The righteous who eat the remnant of the sacrifice, are freed from all sins; but the unholy men who cook for their own sake, verily eat sin. The remnant of the sacrifice is Amrita or ambrosia. It is nectar. Those who eat the remnant of the sacrifice after performing them to the gods, are freed from all sins committed at the five places of slaughter of animate beings—the fire-place, the water-jar, the pestal and mortar, the grindstone, and the broom. Small creatures are unconsciously killed at these five places. That is the reason why the Pancha Maha Yajnas or the five daily sacrifices are prescribed for householders to wash off these sins.

The five daily sacrifices are:

1. Deva Yajna—offering sacrifice to the gods.
2. Brahma Yajna—Teaching and reciting the scriptures.
3. Pitru Yajna—Tarpan or offering libation of water to the manes or forefathers.
4. Manushya Yajna—feeding the poor or the hungry and the guests.
5. Bhuta Yajna—feeding birds, animals and fish.

The performance of the Bhuta Yajna aims at the development of mercy and realizing the unity of life and consciousness. It helps the performer to see and feel the one Satchidananda in all, and all in the One. It brings in Adwaitic realization of oneness or unity or identity in the end. If one does this Yajna with Prem, Shraddha and Bhav, he will have the same

experience which an Adwaita Vedantin has through Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. Look at the beauty of the Hindu scriptures and the teachings of the Hindu Rishis and sages! They prescribe various methods for men of various calibre and capacity. Every man can have Self-realization in his own station of life by discharging his daily duties. Even a scavanger, cobbler or washerman can attain the highest good or God-consciousness by discharging his duties in an unselfish manner.

"From food creatures become; from rain is the production of food; rain proceedeth from sacrifice. Sacrifice ariseth out of action. Know thou that from Brahma action groweth, and Brahma from the Imperishable cometh. Therefore the all-permeating, the eternal, is ever present in sacrifice." Gita—Ch. III-14, 15.

Manu says: "The offering given into the fire reaches the sun; from the sun cometh the rain; from rain cometh food; and from this food all creatures." Manu Smriti—III-76.

The Lord of this world is at the back of all activities. Without Him even an atom or leaf cannot move even a fraction of an inch. He is the true actor. The individuals are simply the media of this activity.

Apurva or Adrishta is an unseen or hidden power in action which gives fruits. It is the result of the activities. It is an unseen form which an action assumes between the time of its performance and the

time when its results become manifested. It is the connecting link between the cause and effect.

If a man does not follow the wheel of the universe thus revolving, if he leads a sensual life of absolute selfishness, he is simply wasting his life. He is committing great sin indeed. The basic foundation of the world-order is mutuality and healthy co-operation. No one should disturb its equilibrium and interfere with its working. Man is not brought here to amass wealth by illegal means for himself and his children.

He should not remain an idler. He should not act selfishly. He should not refuse to work. He must perform his allotted work. This whole world is a big factory of God. The main wheel revolves. Leather belts are attached to other wheels and machines. Each small part or machine does its own allotted work. Man must do the Pancha Maha Yajnas daily. He must do Sandhya, Nitya and Naimittika Karmas. He must serve others. He is part of the cycle and must perform his assigned task like the other parts. If he fails in the discharge of his duties, and leads a sensual life, he is a mere burden on earth. It is better if such a man gives up his physical body and creates a void for the better filling of air.

A Jnani who rests in his own Swaroop, who rejoices in the Self within, who is satisfied in his Self, and who is also contented in the Self, has nothing to do. He is not bound to do anything to keep up the wheel of the world. He is an Apta Kama, one in

whom all desires have been gratified. He has done everything. He has obtained everything. For him there is no interest whatsoever in what is done or what is not done, nor does any object of his depend on any being.

No Pratyavaya Dosha will affect him from his inaction. He has nothing to gain by action. He has no particular object in view. He need not depend upon anybody. He is quite independent. He need not exert, because he has nothing to gain. Karma Yoga is not meant for the knower of the Self. Though he does not work or serve society physically, he does help the world mentally and spiritually. Vyavahara for the Jnani depends purely upon his Prarabdha. One may do a great deal of Vyavahara in society, another may remain quiet in a cave. The quiet Jnani is an embodiment of Vedic teachings. His very life is a living assurance for others for God-realization. Aspirants draw inspiration from him. His powerful spiritual vibrations purify the world and elevate others. Those who are thirsty after divine knowledge are bathed by the magnetic currents of a silent Jnani. His powerful thoughts travel a long distance and penetrate into the corners of the different parts of the world. Prakriti will certainly utilise the merits and attainment of the silent Jnani. Just as the sweet fragrance of th jasmine is wafted in the air, so also the fame of th Jnani spreads far and wide, and people resort to h abode. They get instructions from him. This is mo

solid work. Real aspirants are benefited. Curiosity-mongers can have no access to him. They do not want these higher spiritual teachings. In fact it is this silent Jnani who does more substantial work than the platform lecturers. Psychologists and occultists can very well understand the truth of this statement. Workers in the political and social fields, whose minds are saturated with Karmic Samskaras and tendencies cannot comprehend the veracity of this statement. Sri Aurobindo, who was once a great Karma Yogin, has shut himself up in a room for the last twenty-two years. He has become now a glorious Yogi. He does help the world more now with his supra-mental vibrations and divine experiences. He trains aspirants in the Ashram. Some of the aspirants who are developed will take up his work and disseminate divine knowledge.

Constantly perform action which is duty for the sake of Ishwara without attachment. You will attain Moksha through attaining Chitta Suddhi or purity of mind. Purify the inner motive which directs your activity. Remove selfishness. Then you will be able to work for the well-being of the world (Lokasangraha). The wise should set an example to the masses They should work for the uplift of the world. Janaka and others verily aimed at Moksha by doing selfless and disinterested works. Man is a creature of imitation. He tries to follow the example of his superiors. Whatsoever a great man does, that other men also do.

The standard of right and wrong he sets up by his own conduct, by that the common masses go.

Though you are a Yogi or a Jnani, do no unsettle the minds of the ignorant people who are attached to action. Do the actions diligently which the ignorant have to do and make them do those actions. Glorify action. Make all action very attractive. The wise should not disturb unknowing persons of petty understanding.

Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: "All actions are wrought by the qualities of nature only. The self, deluded by egoism, thinketh: 'I am the doer'. But he, O mighty-armed, who knoweth the essence of the divisions of the qualities and functions, holding that 'the qualities move amidst the qualities', is not attached to the functions of the qualities. The man of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the foolish whose knowledge is imperfect. Surrendering all actions to Me, with thy thoughts resting in the supreme Self, freed from hope and egoism, and of mental fever cured, engage in battle." Ch. III-27, 28, 29 and 30.

"There is nothing in the three worlds, O Partha, that should be done by Me, nor anything unattained that might be attained; yet I mingle in action. For if I mingled not ever in action, unwearied, men all around would follow My path, O son of Pritha. The world would fall into ruin if I did not perform action. I should be the author of confusion of castes, and

should destroy these creatures. As the ignorant act from attachment to action, O Bharata, so should the wise act without attachment, desiring the welfare of the world. Let no wise man unsettle the minds of the ignorant attached to action; but acting in harmony with Me, let him render all action attractive." Ch. III-22 to 26.

2. SCOPE FOR PERSONAL EXERTION

In the Gita you will find: "Even the man of knowledge acts in conformity with his own nature; beings follow nature; what shall restraint avail." Ch. III-33.

The meaning of this Sloka is misunderstood by many people. Many have become fatalists. They lead a life of inertia. They say: "What is the use of our exertion? Nature is all-in-all. We cannot go against nature? Nature is irresistable. All living beings follow their own nature. There is influence of man's nature on his conduct. What can coercion and inhibition do? Let us not exert ourselves." This is a sad mistake. It is a lamentable misapprehension.

There is a clear solution for this in the next Sloka 34. Slokas 33 and 34 should go together. Then the meaning is quite clear. Even the man of knowledge or a Jnani behaves according to his own nature. It needs no saying that a man of ignorance acts according to his own nature, because he does not know how to control it. If every individual behaves

according to his own nature only, if there is none who has no nature of his own, then there is no scope for individual exertion (Purushartha). In that case the teachings of the Sastras which inspire people to right exertion would be quite purposeless.

In the next verse Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to do Purushartha, to go above Raga Dwesha, the two currents of attraction and repulsion. "Affection and aversion for the objects of the senses abide in the senses; let none come under the dominion of these two; they are the destroyers of the path." Ch.III-34. If the aspirant has controlled these two Vrittis, he has already conquered Nature, he has become the lord of Nature. He can command Nature. Nature has become his obedient servant. Nature operates through these two Vrittis. What you call the universe is only Raga Dwesha. There is no world for that Jnani or Yogi who has subdued these two Vrittis. There is no world apart from these two Vrittis. Man is bound or attached to sensual objects through the Vritti, Raga. When he develops Vairagya, Raga is annihilated. An ignorant man is a slave of these two Vrittis and so he is tossed about hither and thither like a straw in this ocean of Samsara. Patanjali Maharishi prescribes easy definite methods in his Raja Yoga philosophy to control these two Vrittis. His definition of Yoga is:

Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodhah

"Yoga is control or restraint of the modifications *of the Chitta.*"

He also prescribes Purushartha to extirpate Vrittis and control nature and to attain Kaivalya Moksha or independence. He does not say: "Nature is very powerful, keep quiet and become a slave of nature. What is the use of your struggle and Sadhana?" His Yoga is an exact science. He prescribes definite, positive, accurate and effective methods to control nature. He says: "Control the Vrittis and then rest in your own Swaroopa (essence). The whole nature is under your control." Vasishtha also asks Sri Rama to do Purushartha.

Through Raga a man loves an object; through Dwesha he dislikes an object. If anyone rises above the sway of likes and dislikes, love and hatred, *affection and aversion, he is no longer subject to his* nature. He can understand the teachings of the Sastras. His mind is pure. If he becomes a victim of these two currents, his mind becomes impure. He cannot understand the significance of the Sastras. He neglects his own duties. He begins to do the duties of others as his mind is in a state of confusion and bewilderment. Raga Dwesha are great obstacles in the spiritual path. They are the adversaries of a man or aspirant. They are like robbers on the highway. If Viveka and Vichara (discrimination and enquiry of the nature of the Atman) dawn in the aspirant, Raga Dwesha will take to their heels.

O man! Learn practical lessons from Nature. The mango tree does Purushartha. It gives shade to the weary traveller and delicious fruit to the proprietor. The jasmine emanates sweet fragrance to all. The ants are busy with collecting grains in summer. They enjoy the grain in their holes during the rainy season and in winter. The bees collect honey vigorously from the flowers and get intoxicated with joy drinking honey. The rivers supply good sparkling water to people. The sun gives energy and warmth to plants and human beings and converts saltish waters of the sea into good drinkable water. The sandal tree sends out fragrance in all directions. The musk-deer gives musk. The earth supplies grains, gold, iron, lead, vegetables and other necessities to man. The parents prescribe Purushartha to their children The teachers ask the student: "Study well, have a good character. Pass in your examination and get a good job. Do charity, control the senses and become a good man."

You will find in the Gita: "But the disciplined self, moving among sense-objects with senses free from attraction and repulsion, mastered by the self, goeth to peace." Ch. II-64. The difficulty that you encountered in Sloka 33 is now obviated. Do Purushartha now. Remove Raga Dwesha and rest in peace. Then Nature becomes your obedient servant. You are the master or lord of Nature. Do Sadhana. Practise! Practise! Realize! Realize! This is your highest duty. You have taken this body to achieve this end!

3. PRAKRITI DOES EVERYTHING

All actions are done by the qualities of nature only. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks: 'I am the doer'. This is the cause of bondage. The Gunas only do all actions. The ignorant man identifies himself through the force of Avidya with his body, mind and Indriyas which are the products or effects of the three Gunas—Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. Now comes the trouble. If he thinks: 'I am the doer', he has to enjoy the good and bad fruits of his actions. He is brought again and again to this Mrityu-loka.

He who sees that Prakriti performs all actions and that the Self is actionless, really sees. The wise man who knows the essence of the divisions of the qualities and functions, holding that "the qualities move amidst the qualities" is not attached. He separates himself from the body, mind and organs. He stands as a witness of these Upadhis and their functions by identifying himself with the pure inner Self or Atman. He says: "Seeing, hearing, touching, speaking, giving, grasping, opening and closing the eyes, are functions of the Indriyas. I have nothing to do. They are the *Dharmas of the senses. I am distinct from the senses* The senses move among the senses. I am Nirlipta I am Asanga." This is the Drishti (vision) or Nischaya (determination) of a Jnani. He escapes from the bondage of Karmas He is freed from the wheel of birth and death.

4. ACTION AND INACTION

Lord Krishna says: "What is action, what is inaction? Even the wise are herein perplexed. I will declare to thee the action by knowing which thou shalt be freed from evil. It is needful to discriminate unlawful action, to discriminate inaction—the path of action is mysterious. He who seeth inaction in action and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is harmonious, even while performing all action." Gita: Ch. III-16, 17.

People generally think that action means movement of the body, and inaction means the absence of it, to sit quiet. Sri Sankara writes: "He who sees inaction in action, *i.e.*, he who has the right knowledge that action, which is commonly supposed by all to pertain to the Self, does not really belong to the Self, just as motion does not really pertain to the trees (on the shore of the river) which appear (to a man on board the ship) to move in the opposite direction, and who sees action in inaction, *i.e.*, he who knows that even inaction is action,—for, inaction is but a cessation of bodily and mental activities, and like action it is falsely attributed to the Self and causes the feeling of egoism as expressed in the words 'quiet and doing nothing, I sit happy"—he who can realize the nature of action and inaction as now explained is wise among men: he is a devout Yogin, he is the performer of actions, he is released

from evil and has achieved all."

Lord Krishna says: "Having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action, always content, nowhere seeking refuge, he is not doing anything, although doing actions. Hoping for naught, his mind and self controlled, having abandoned all greed, performing action by the body alone he doth not commit sin. Content with whatsoever he obtaineth without effort, free from the pairs of opposites, without envy, balanced in success and failure, though acting he is not bound. Of one with attachment dead, harmonious and with his thoughts controlled in wisdom, his works being all sacrifices, all actions melt away. The Eternal the oblation, the Eternal the clarified butter, are offered in the Eternal fire by the Eternal; unto the Eternal verily shall he go, who, in his action, meditateth wholly upon the Eternal. He who hath renounced action by Yoga, who hath rent asunder doubts by wisdom, who is ruled by the Self, actions do not bind, O Arjuna!" Gita: Ch. IV-20 to 24, 41.

When a man regards the action as if it were for him, he has 'action-mentality', and when he treats of it as God-ordained and for God, he being just a spectator, he has 'inaction-mentality'.

If an action is done with Nishkamya Bhava as Ishwararpana, then it is no action at all. It is 'inaction in action'.

If you identify yourself with Brahman and stand as a witness of the activities of Prakriti and its effects,

mind, Indriyas and body, you will realize 'inaction in action'. Brahman is Nishkriya, Akarta, Niravayava. But he is the *primum mobile.* He gives a push and Prakriti moves and acts. He gazes and Prakriti moves and acts. Without His presence Prakriti cannot do anything. Therefore it is Brahman only who really does all actions. This is 'action in inaction' as taught in the Gita.

5. ACTION AND ACTOR

"Action performed as duty, without attachment, without love or hate, without desire for fruit, is called pure (Sattwic). But that action that is done by one longing for pleasures, or again with egoism, or with much effort, is declared to be passionate (Rajasic). The action performed under delusion without regard to the capacity and consequences, loss and injury to others, is declared to be dark (Tamasic)." Gita: Ch. XVIII-23, 24, 25.

"Free from attachment, not egoistic, endued with firmness and enthusiasm, unaffected in success and failure, that actor is called pure (Sattwic). Passionate and desiring to attain the fruit of actions, greedy, cruel, impure, moved by joy and sorrow, such an actor is said to be passionate (Rajasic). Fickle, cheating, vulgar, stubborn, malicious, indolent, despondent and procrastinating, such an actor is said to be dark (Tamasic)." Gita: Ch. XVIII-26 to 28.

6. SELF-SURRENDER

"Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever thou doest of austerity, do thou that as an offering unto Me." Ch. IX-27.

"On Me fix thy mind, be devoted to Me, prostrate thyself before Me; harmonised thus in the Self, thou shalt come unto Me, having Me as thy supreme goal." Ch. IX-34.

The ideas that are contained in Sloka 34 of chapter nine are repeated in Sloka 65 of chapter thirteen. But there is the word of assurance given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna: "I pledge thee My truth; thou art dear to Me." The Lord further says: "Abandoning all duties, come unto Me alone for shelter, sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins. Flee unto Him for shelter, O Bharata; by His Grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace, the ever-lasting dwelling place." Ch. XVIII-66,62.

"For a sage who is seeking Yoga, action is called the means, for the same sage, when he is enthroned in Yoga, serenity is called the means. When a man feeleth no attachment either for the objects of the senses or for actions, renouncing all formative will, then he is said to be enthroned in Yoga." Ch. VI-3 and 4.

"Therefore at all times think upon Me only, and fight. With mind and reason set on Me, without

doubt, thou shalt come unto Me." Ch. VIII-7.

"He who doeth actions for Me, whose supreme good I am, My devotee freed from attachment, without hatred of any being, he cometh unto Me, O Pandava." Ch. XI-55.

"Restraining and subduing the senses, regarding everything equally, in the welfare of all rejoicing, these also come to Me. If also thou art not equal to constant practice, be intent in My service; performing all action for My sake, thou shalt attain perfection. Ch. XII-4 and 10.

"He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose reason is not affected, though he slayeth these men, he slayeth not, nor is he bound. Though ever performing all actions, take refuge in Me; by My Grace thou obtaineth the eternal indestructible abode. Renouncing mentally all works in Me, intent on Me, resorting to the Yoga of discrimination, have thought on Me. The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, and by His illusive power, causeth all beings to revolve, as though mounted on a potter's wheel." Ch. XVIII-17, 56, 57, 61.

7. KARMA YOGA BETTER THAN RENUNCIATION

Arjuna said to Lord Krishna: "O Krishna, Thou praiseth renunciation of actions and then also Yoga (of action or Nishkamya Karma Yoga). Of the two which is better? That tell me conclusively." The Lord

said: "Renunciation and Yoga by action both lead to the highest bliss; of the two, Yoga by action is verily better than renunciation of action. A Nitya Sannyasin or perpetual ascetic is one who neither hates nor desires, one who is free from the pairs of opposites. Children, not sages, speak of the Sankhya (Jnana Yoga) and Yoga (Karma Yoga) as different; he who is duly established in one obtaineth the fruits of both. That abode which is gained by those practising Sankhya is reached by the Yogis also."

"He seeth who seeth that the Sankhya and Yoga are one. But without Yoga, O mighty-armed, renunciation is hard to attain to; the Yoga-harmonised Muni swiftly goeth to the Eternal. He who is harmonised by Yoga, the self-purified, self-ruled, with senses subdued, whose self is the self of all beings, although acting, he is not affected. He who acteth, placing all actions in the Eternal, abandoning all kinds of *attachment*, is una*ff*ected by sin as a lotus leaf by the drops of water. Yogis, having abandoned all attachment, perform action by the body, by the mind, by the reason and even by the senses, only for the purification of the self."

"The harmonised man, having abandoned the fruits of action, attaineth to the eternal peace; the non-harmonised, impelled by desire, attached to fruit, is bound. Mentally removing all actions, the sovereign dweller in the body resteth serenely in the nine-gated city, *neither acting nor causing to act* The Lord of the

world produceth not the idea of agency, nor actions, nor the union together of action and its fruit; nature however, manifesteth. The Lord accepteth neither the evil-doing nor yet the well-doing of any. Wisdom is enveloped by ignorance; therewith mortals are deluded." Ch. V-1 to 16.

Arjuna said to Lord Krishna: "I desire to know severally the essence of renunciation, O Hrishikesha, and of relinquishment, O Kesinishudana."

The Blessed Lord said: "Sages have known as renunciation as the renouncing of works with desire; the relinquishing of the fruit of all actions is called relinquishment by the wise. 'Action should be relinquished as an evil', declare some thoughtful men. 'Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished', say others. Hear My conclusions as to that relinquishment, O best of the Bharatas, since relinquishment, O tiger of men, has been explained as threefold. Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished, but should be performed; sacrifice, gift and also austerity are the purifiers of the intelligent. But even these actions should be done leaving aside attachment and fruit, O Partha; that is My certain and best belief. Verily renunciation of actions that are prescribed is not proper, the relinquishment thereof from delusion is said to be of darkness. He who relinquisheth an action from fear of physical suffering, saying that it is painful, thus performing a passionate relinquishment, obtaineth

not the fruit of relinquishment. He who performeth a prescribed action, saying: 'It ought to be done', O Arjuna, relinquishing attachment and also its fruit, that relinquishment is regarded as pure. The relinquisher, pervaded by purity, intelligence and with doubts cut away, hateth not unpleasurable action nor is attached to pleasurable. Nor indeed can embodied beings completely relinquish action; verily he who relinquisheth the fruit of action he is said to be a relinquisher. Good, evil and mixed—threefold is the fruit of action hereafter for the non-relinquisher, but there is none ever for the renouncer." Cf. XVIII. 9 to 12.

Chapter Eight

INSPIRING STORIES

1. TIRUVALLUVAR

IN MYLAPORE, Madras, there lived about two thousand years ago a born Siddha and born poet by the name of Valluvar, or, as he is more commonly known, Tiruvalluvar. He is regarded as an Avatar of Brahma. He married Vasuki and led the life of a householder to show people the way of lead- a divine life, a life of purity and sanctity, while living in the world. All his wise sayings and teachings are now in book-form and is known as *Tirukurral*. These sayings and teachings are in couplets. Here are some of them:

Just as the alphabet 'A' is the beginning of all letters, so also God is the beginning for this universe.

Learn the Sastras completely and then act according to their injunctions.

The Anicha flower will fade by smelling but guests are more sensitive if the hosts turn their faces a bit.

Death is like sleeping in the burial ground, birth is like waking in the morning.

These couplets are 1330 in number. They contain the essence of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the six Darshanas. Tirukurral is regarded as a universal Bible. It is another Gita, Koran or Zend Avesta.

Some aspirants repaired to Tiruvalluvar and en-

quired: "O sage, which Ashrama of life is better—Grahastha or Sannyasa?" The sage did not give any answer. He simply kept quiet. He wanted to teach *them the glory of Grahastha Ashrama by example.* His wife was an ideal, chaste and devoted lady who would never disobey his orders, but would implicitly carry them out. Once Tiruvalluvar was taking cold rice in the morning. He said to her: "O Vasuki, the rice is very hot, bring a fan to cool it." She was at the time drawing water from the dwell when he called her. She at once left the rope and ran to him with a fan to cool down the rice. She did not say to her husband: "How can cool rice be hot? Why do you want a fan now?" She simply obeyed his commands. The vessel that contained water was hanging half-way in the well fearful of her Pativrata Dharma Shakti. The aspirants noticed this strange phenomenon and the noble conduct of Vasuki, and were struck with amazement.

On another occasion Valluvar called his wife at 1 p.m. and said: "Bring a lamp immediately, O Vasuki. I am stitching a piece of cloth. I cannot see the eye of the needle. I cannot pass the thread properly." She did not say: "It is broad daylight now. Why do you want a lamp? You can see the needle properly." But she implicitly obeyed his word. The aspirants were much inspired by *the ideal life of sage* Tiruvalluvar and the exalted conduct of his wife. They did not speak a word to the saint. They quietly

left the place with profound satisfaction. They were deeply impressed by the practical and exemplary life led by the sage and his wife. They learnt a lesson that the life of an ideal householder is in no way inferior to that of an ideal Sannyasin who is treading the path of Nivritti and austerity in the Himalayan caves, and that each is great in his own place.

Dear reader! Can you find a single devoted wife like Vasuki in these days of modern civilization and scientific advancement? If the husbands of the present day behave like Tiruvalluvar, the wives will say: "My husband has become senseless. He wants to fan the rice when it is cold! He wants a light when there is broad daylight." The wives will rebuke their husbands and fight with them. They will seek separation.

That house wherein the wife serves the husband with sincere devotion and observes Pativrata Dharma, is heaven on earth. That house wherein the wife fights with the husband and disobeys his orders, is a veritable hell on earth. Ladies who practise Pativrata Dharma need not go to temples. They need not practise any Vrata or penance. Service of husband becomes worship. They can realize God through service of their husbands. Husbands also should be ideal persons with noble qualities. Husbands are the Gurus for their wives. Wives need not get any initiation from any Acharya. Glory to such exalted ladies who practise Pativrata Dharma!

2. STORY OF A BANIA

A Bania once approached a Sadhu for Initiation. The Sadhu said: "I will initiate you when I meet you next time." The Bania pressed the Sadhu again and again on several days for quick Initiation. The Sadhu totally declined. He returned to the Bania after a couple of years. He placed in his Bhiksha bowl some mud, hair, urine and excreta and approached the Bania for alms. The Bania brought nice sweet meats, Kheer, Halwa, etc., for the Sadhu. He prepared nice dishes as he thought he would be initiated this time by the Sadhu. The Sadhu said to the Bania: "Put

3. RAJA GOPICHAND

Minavaty, mother of Raja Gopichand, gave four instructions to her son: 1. Eat nectar-food. 2. Sleep on a bed of flowers (Pushpa Shayana). 3. Live within the iron fort. 4. Enjoy with the most beautiful woman (Param Sundari).

The Adhyatmic meaning or esoteric significance of these instructions is this. 1. When you are really hungry, eat your food. It will be digested well. It will be palatable like nectar. Hunger is the best sauce. 2. When you become really sleepy, lie down; you will get sound sleep even though you lie down on a bed of stones. 3. Live in the company of dispassionate Yogis, Sannyasins and Mahatmas. This is the iron fort. No temptations will allure you. 4. Meditate and raise the Brahmakara-Vritti and enjoy with Brahma. This is enjoyment with the most beautiful woman.

4. STORY OF A PANDIT

Once a learned Khat-Sastri, a Brahmin Pandit and a Chandala were crossing the river Ravi in a boat in Lahore. The boat capsized owing to the fierce wind. Both the Pandit and the outcaste were about to be drowned. They were drinking water again and again. The arrogant and audacious Pandit told the Chandala: "Dont' drink the same water from the upper surface of the river which I am drinking. You are polluting

me, O Chandala! Drink only the water from the lower portion of the river." Look at the petty-mindedness of the learned Pandit! The Chandala is at the point of death. His life is trembling in the balance and yet the Pandit sees so much difference and entertains the idea of Brahmin-superiority! Do you think that the Brahmin Pandit will feel his oneness with all even after millions of births? What is the earthly use of his Khat-Sastra, learning and knowledge? Fie on those miserable wretched Brahmin Pandits who are petty-minded and narrow-hearted! Glory to large-hearted Pandits!

5. THE JOLLY ANT

Once an ant that was living in a mountain of sugar met another ant living in a mountain of salt and asked: "Hallo, my dear friend! How do you do?" It replied: "I am not as jolly as you are. My mouth is always saltish as I am living in a mountain of salt." The jolly ant said: "Come along now to my abode. I shall make you jolly. I live in a huge mountain of sugar. I shall make your tongue always sweet." The unhappy ant followed the jolly ant to the mountain of sugar and lived there for a week. The jolly ant asked his friend: "How do you fare now, my amiable comrade. It replied: "Still the same as my lot, my good friend. "Wash your mouth well with this saccharine solution. Rub your tongue well with this

sugar soap. Your tongue needs good brushing up. You were living for several years in a mountain of salt." It followed the instructions of the jolly ant. From the eighth day its mouth became sweet. It also became very jolly.

Some aspirants keep within themselves some hidden subtle desires, greed, Moha and pride. These Doshas cling to their minds just as the old salt clung to the tongue of the miserable ant. They complain like the ant of the salt mountain: "We have no spiritual progress. We have no Self-realization. We are not enjoying spiritual bliss."

Rub your mind and the heart with the soap of Japa and selfless service. Eradicate all the desires and impurities of the mind. You will enjoy the supreme bliss of Paramatma.

6. RAJA JANAK

Raja Janak once commanded a Brahmin who committed a serious crime to leave his dominion at once. The Brahmin said: "O Rajan, kindly tell me the extent of your dominion. Then I will leave your state and settle down in the dominion of another Rajan". Janak did not say anything in reply. He sobbed heavily. He reflected seriously. Then he swooned suddenly. He came back to his senses after fifteen minutes. He then said: "I have inherited the state of my father. It is under my control, but nothing

belongs to me exclusively. I cannot find my exclusive dominion anywhere, not even in Mithila and in my own progeny. Now real wisdom has dawned in me. I am now under the impression that either I have no dominion at all or all is my dominion. Either this body is not mine or the whole world is mine, and similarly that of others too. O best of the twice-born! This is my firm conviction. Stay in my dominion as long as you like and enjoy."

The Brahmin asked: "O king! What has made you regard this kingdom as not yours or all as yours? How have you renounced the feeling of 'mine-ness' in this kingdom of your ancestors, which you are ruling?" Janak replied: "Everything is perishable on the physical plane. Life is evanescent. Everything passes away. I could lay my finger on nothing which I could call as mine. I remembered the Vedic text: 'It was anybody's property.' I reflected in this manner and so I have given up the idea of 'mine-ness'. Hearken carefully now as to how I see my dominion everywhere. I have no desire for the objects that give good smell: so I have conquered the earth. I have no desire for tasty things, beautiful forms, soft cushions or beds, or music: therefore I have conquered water, fire, air and ether. I do not desire anything for the mind, it is therefore under my perfect control. I do actions for the Devas, ancestors, for all beings and for those who come to my door."

Then the Brahmin smiled and said: "O king! I am

Dharma in disguise. I have come to learn something about you. You are the only person to turn this wheel, the name of which is Brahman, the spoke of which is reason, which never turns back and which is kept to its course by the quality of goodness as its circumference." (Anugita: Ch. 17).

7. AN IDEAL KARMA-JNANA-YOGI

A Sadhu went to the court of Raja Janak and observed all his manifold activities. He then thought within himself: 'How can we call Raja Janak a Jnani? How can we take him for a spiritual man? He is only a worldly man. He is entrapped in so many worldly matters. He talks on worldly topics." Raja Janak, through his Divya Drishti or eye of intuition, understood the mentality of the Sadhu.

Calling the Sadhu to his side, Janak said: "You seem to be a culprit. You are unfit to wear the garb of a saint. You are not thinking of God. The nature of fault-finding is deeply ingrained in you. I have decided to give you capital punishment. You will be hanged within a week.

The king ordered his servants to give the Sadhu vegetables without salt, sweetmeats with chillies, and delicious Kheer and almonds and raisins with tamarind daily. The Sadhu was terribly alarmed. He spent sleepless nights. He became very nervous. He always thought of the gallows. He dreamt daily that his

neck was being tied with a rope. He became very thin and pale.

Raja Janak sent a servant to call the Sadhu on the seventh day for execution. The Sadhu was unable to stand before the king. He trembled and fell on the ground senseless. He came back to consciousness after ten minutes when Janak offered him some fruits and a cup of milk with salt. The Sadhu drank it. But his mind was on the gallows.

The sage-king then said: "Look here, O Sadhu! How do you like the taste of the milk now? Was it good? Did the milk contain sufficient sugar? How did you relish the food these seven days?" The Sadhu replied: "O Rajan, I did not feel any taste in the food or in the milk that you offered me just now. My mind is only the gallows all the time. I see only gallows everywhere. I have become a prey to the thought of the gallows. I did not know whether the vegetables or soup contained salt or sugar." Raja Janak said· "O Sadhu, just as your mind is always on the gallows, so also my mind is always fixed on Brahman through my intense practice of Nididhyasan, although I engage myself in various sorts of worldly activities. Though I am in this world, I am out of the world always Do you understand my mental state? In future do not look to the faults of others. Mind your own business always. Look to the good points of others. Glorify others. Do intense meditation. Realize. Work for the world unattached like myself.

Now you can go."

The Sadhu was very much pleased with the king. He now realized his folly and the true glory of King Janak. He understood fully that Janak was a wonderful Brahma-Nishtha and had perfect balance of mind amidst multifarious activities. He prostrated before him again and again and took leave. Then he did intense Sadhana, realized the Self and followed the example of Raja Janak in doing service to the world.

Raja Janak was a full-blown Jnani though he worked in the world. His Jnana was tested. He was in the Durbar hall when a messenger brought the news that there was fire in the city. Janak said: "My wealth is unlimited, and yet I have nothing. Even if the whole of Mithila is burnt, yet nothing is lost to me."

The name of Raja Janak is always associated with Karma Yoga and Karma Nishtha. In the Gita also Lord Krishna speaks to Arjuna: 'Janak and others indeed attained perfection by action; then, having an eye to the welfare of the world also, thou shouldst perform action. Whatever a great man doeth, that other men also do; the standard he setteth up, by that the people go. Therefore, without attachment, constantly perform action which is duty, for by performing action without attachment, man verily reacheth the Supreme.' Ch. III-19, 20, 21.

It is very difficult to find out the state of a Jnani by his external actions. Jnana is purely a mental state.

It is an internal condition. A Jnani only can understand another Jnani. Atma Jnana is imperishable and inexhaustible wealth. The wealth of the three worlds is nothing, I say nothing, when compared to the priceless treasures of the Atman. That is the reason why Janak was not at all affected by the destruction of the city of Mithila. He stood adamantine on the rock of Atma Jnana.

8. HIGHEST SELF-SACRIFICE

King Yudhisthira performed a great sacrifice (Yajna) after the battle of Kurukshetra was over. He gave very rich presents to the priests and to the poor. All were greatly astonished at the grandeur of this magnanimous sacrifice They exclaimed with great joy: "We have never seen in our life time such a splendid sacrifice. There had never been such a glorious Yajna in the annals of the world's history. Glory to King Yudhisthira! Glory to Arjuna! Glory to the Pandavas and Draupadi!"

A small mongoose appeared on the scene. Half of his body was golden and the other half was brown. He rolled on the ground where the Yajna was performed. He then exclaimed with sorrow: "This is no Yajna at all. Why do you praise this sacrifice in such glowing terms? You are all hypocrites and liars." The people replied: "What! You silly mongoose! Have you not realized the glory of this Maha Yajna?

housands of poor people have become very rich. Aillions of people have been sumptuously fed. Jewels nd clothes have been distributed in abundance. The world has never witnessed such wonderful sacrifice. Get thee gone, O miserable wretch, O foolish mongoose!"

The mongoose replied: "My dear sirs, don't be annoyed with me unnecessarily. Just hear my words with patience. There was a poor Brahmin in a small village. He lived in a small hut with his wife, son and daughter-in-law. There was a great famine. The whole family suffered for months. They were starving for days together. One day the poor man brought some rice and dhal. When they were ready to take their meals, they heard a voice at their door. The Brahmin opened the door and found a guest. He said: 'O venerable guest, come inside. Take your seat and your food.' He gave his portion of the food to the guest. The guest said: 'Sir, my hunger is not satisfied. I am starving for the last fifteen days.' The wife said to her husband: 'My lord, here is my share. Kindly give him this portion of food. I am thy Ardhangini. It is my duty to share with you the weal and woe of life. The Sastras and Smritis declare like this em phatically.' The guest ate this portion also, but stil his hunger was not appeased. The son said: 'Dea father, I must do my duty to you, otherwise peopl will criticise me. I must please you in the fulfilmer of you holy wish. Give him my share also.' The gue

ate this and yet he remained unsatisfied. The wife of the son said: 'O venerable father-in-law, you have all performed the greatest self-sacrifice. I must also join in this Yajna. Kindly give him my portion too.' The guest ate this portion and was fully satisfied. He then blessed the poor Brahmin and his family and departed in great joy. These four persons died of starvation the same day. A few grains of rice were found on the ground. I rolled myself on those particles. Half of my body became golden. Since then I have been travelling all over the world to find out another Yajna like that. Nowhere have I found one. Nowhere have I been able to convert the other half of my body into gold. This sacrifice of Yudhisthira has not turned the other half of the body into gold. That is the reason why I say that this is no sacrifice at all. Have you understood my point well. Do not become angry. Truth can never hurt the feeling of others." The priests and others who enjoyed the Yajna of Raja Yudhisthira were put to shame. They hung down their heads in shame. They realized now what true sacrifice was, that it should be free from pride and vanity.

Mark here the glory of the poor Brahmin and his remarkable spirit of self-sacrifice! He was an ideal householder. He was an ideal Karma Yogi. He reached the same state of Kaivalya as that of a Brahma Jnani or a Raja Yogi. May you all shine as this poor Brahmin!

9. STORY OF A BIRD

Four travellers had to take their rest one night under a big tree. It was winter. So they started a fire to warm themselves. A bird lived in the tree with its wife and children. The little bird looked down and saw the travellers. It said to its wife: "My dear, what shall we do now? There are some guests in our house. They are hungry. We must entertain them any how. We are householders and should show hospitality. We have nothing to offer them. I will offer my body to them." It dropped itself into the fire below and got roasted.

The wife of the bird witnessed the noble action of the husband. It thought within itself: 'There are four guests. The flesh of one bird is not sufficient for all of them. Let me also do some sacrifice in the fulfilment of the pure Sankalpa of my husband. The duty of the wife is to serve and please the husband at all times.' It also plunged itself into the fire and soon perished.

The five little ones said: "Still the food is not sufficient for our four guests. Our parents have done their duty well. We should keep up the name of our worthy parents. They have done great sacrifice; we should also contribute something towards this Atithi Yajna." They also fell into the fire and were burnt to death.

The four travellers were struck with utter amaze-

ment when they wisnessed the deeds of the little birds. They did not eat the flesh. They remained without food.

Mark here the spirit of self-sacrifice of these little birds! Draw inspiration by remembering the ideal life led by them. A Karma Yogi or a householder should possess the virtue of self-sacrifice to a remarkable degree. He should be prepared to give up the body at any time to a noble cause. That Karma Yogi or householder who sacrifices his body for a noble cause reaches the same goal that is attained by a Raja Yogi through Asamprajnata Samadhi, or by a Hatha Yogi through awakening of the Kundalini and taking it to Sahasrara, or by a Vedantin through Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasan. No pain, no gain. Greatness cannot be achieved without sacrifice both in the phvsical and spiritual planes.

APPENDIX

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR KARMA YOGIS

1. See God in every face, in everything.

2. Repeat mentally or silently or with the breath the Name of the Lord, such as 'Hari Om', 'Sri Ram', or your own Ishta Mantra or Guru Mantra, even while you work in the office. A strong habit of repetition of the Mantra will soon be formed.

3. Give up meat, hot curries, onions and garlic. Take Sattwic foods like milk, fruits, bread, pulses and vegetables, etc. Eat simple food. Wear simple clothing. Practise celibacy or moderation.

4. Feel that God is the inner Ruler who manipulates your mind, body and the Indriyas. Therefore give up the thought: 'I am the doer'. Feel: 'I am Nimitta or an instrument in His hands. God works through my hands, eats through my mouth and sees through my eyes.'

5. Do not expect any fruit for your actions, not even approbation, thanks, gratitude, appreciation, applause, return of salute or smile, etc.

6. Offer all actions, their fruit, body, mind, the Indriyas and the soul as flowers at the Lotus-feet of the Lord.

7. Never, never say: 'I have helped that man.' Feel

and think: 'That man gave me an opportunity to serve. This piece of service has helped me to purify my mind. I am extremely grateful to him.'

8. Feel that the world is a manifestation of God. *Harireva Jagat Jagadeva Harih. Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat.* Serve with Narayana Bhav. Feel that you are serving God in all beings.

9. Discipline the Indriyas. Control them. Develop alertness, decision, discrimination, mercy, tolerance, forgiveness, discernment, patience, cosmic love and equal vision. Have a balanced mind. Be calm, cool and serene always.

10. Combine Bhakti or Jnana with Karma Yoga.

11. Serve poor, sick people. There is no Yajna that is greater than this. Serve everyone with Bhav, Prem and full Shraddha. Serve the Lord in all. Serve your country and society. Serve your parents, brothers and sisters, the Sadhus, Sannyasins, Bhaktas, Mahatmas and your spiritual teachers with devotion and a full heart. Shampoo the legs of sick people. Feel that you are touching the body of the Lord (Virat). Feel that the energy of Hiranyagarbha (cosmic energy) is flowing through your hands. Tap the very source, the store-house of cosmic energy.

12. Be good and do good. Become an embodiment of goodness. Keep the body strong and healthy. Note in your spiritual diary the number of good and [illegible] actions that you do daily.

MANU SMRITI

You cannot gather what you have not sown.

As you have planted the tree, so will it grow. IX 40.

Success in every undertaking depends on destiny and man combined.

The acts of destiny are out of control of man.

Think not of destiny but act thyself. VII-205.

Whatever work a man does, whatever his motive, of that the reward he should get in a corresponding body. XII-81.

Let all men reflect with care and attention, the passage of the soul through diverse forms of Brahma, Devas, men, beasts, plants and stones, in accordance with their good and evil deeds, and also let them apply their minds to virtue only. XIII-22, 42, 86.

SPIRITUAL DIARY

Prepare a similar statement of daily spiritual diary as shown in the following table every month and verify whether you are progressing or not. If you want quick spiritual progress, you should never neglect to record everything in your diary. To change the worldly nature it needs rigorous Sadhana. Apart from these questions you must also mention the following in the remarks column:

1. The names of the Asanas.
2. *The kind of meditation.*
3. What books you keep for Swadhyaya.
4. What your special diet is.
5. Whether you keep a Japa Mala or not.
6. Whether you have a separate room for your meditation.
7. Whether you read the Gita with meaning.

Do not be ashamed to mention your mistakes, vices and failures. This is meant for your own progress only. Do not waste your precious hours. It is enough that you have wasted so many years in idle gossiping. Enough, enough of the troubles you have had all these days in satisfying your senses. Do not say: 'From tomorrow I will be regular.' That tomorrow is for the worthless worldly-minded fools. Be sincere and start doing Sadhana from this very moment. If you are really sincere, He is ever ready to help you, to give you a push in your spiritual march. Make out a copy of this diary and send it to your Guru (*spiritual preceptor*) *who will guide* you, remove all the obstacles in your Sadhana and give you further lessons.

The Spiritual Diary is a whip to goad the mind towards righteousness, ethical perfection and God. If you regularly maintain this diary you will get solace, peace of mind and make progress in the spiritual path.

Maintain a daily diary and realize the marvellous results. Here are the items of the diary. Draw daily columns and fill in the various items every day. Review your progress once a month and send a copy of the diary to your spiritual preceptor.

1. When did you get up?
2. How many hours did you sleep?
3. How many Malas of Japa did you do?
4. How long in Kirtan?
5. How many Pranayamas?
6. How long did you perform Asanas?
7. How long did you meditate in one Asana?
8. How many Gita Slokas did you read or get by heart?
9. How long in the company of the wise (Satsang)?
10. How many hours did you observe Mouna?
11. How long in disinterested selfless service?
12. How much did you give in charity?
13. How many Mantras did you write?
14. How long did you practise physical exercise?
15. How many lies did you tell and with what self-punishment?
17. How many hours did you spend in useless company?
18. How many times did you fail in Brahmacharya?
19. How long in the study of religious books?

20. How many times did you fail in the control of evil habits and with what self-punishment?
21. How long did you concentrate on your Ishtha Devata (Saguna or Nirguna Dhyana)?
22. How many days did you observe fast and vigil?
23. Were you regular in your meditation?
24. What virtue are you developing?
25. What evil quality are you trying to eradicate?
26. Which Indriya is troubling you most?
27. When did you go to bed?

VIRTUES TO BE CULTIVATED

Alms-giving.
Balance of mind.
Brahmacharya.
Brahma Chintan.
Calm and cheerful nature.
Courage.
Desirelessness.
Diligence.
Discipline.
Feeling His presence at all times.
Forbearance.
Frankness.
Generosity.
Humility.
Mowna.
Obedience to all.
Patience.
Perseverance.
Power of endurance.
Purity of heart.
Renunciation.
Self-control and sacrifice.
Serving nature.
Simplicity.
Sincerity.
Strong will-power.
Speaking the truth.
Tolerance.
Unfailing devotion.
Unshakable faith in God.
Dispassion.
Working without attachment.

VICES TO BE ERADICATED

Ambition.
Anger.
Arrogance.
Avaricious nature.
Back-biting.
Censure and criticism.
Conceit.
Crooked-mindedness.
Cruelty.
Deceitful nature.
Depression.
Desire.
Double-dealing.
Dullness.
Egoism.
Envy.
Gambling.
Harsh speech.
Hatred.
Hypocrisy.
Jealousy.
Laziness.
Mischief-mongering.
Lust.
Merciless nature.
Miserliness.
Obstinacy.
Over-eating.
Pride.
Scandal-mongering.
Selfishness.
Untruth.
